Life eternal : here and now /
236.22 N144L
10530
Nairne, Alexander,
Life Pacific College Alumni Library

DATE DUE

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

236.22
N144L

Nairne, Alexander
Life eternal

LIFE Pacific College
Alumni Library
1100 West Covina Blvd.
San Dimas, CA 91773

DEMCO

HUGH REES LT
5&7, REGENT S

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/bwb_S0-CBX-431

# THE LIFE ETERNAL: HERE AND NOW

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

THE FAITH OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. Crown 8vo. 6s. net.

THE FAITH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. Crown 8vo. 6s. net.

THE ALEXANDRINE GOSPEL (Sirach, Wisdom, Philo, The Epistle to the Hebrews).
Crown 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.
*Liverpool Diocesan Board of Divinity Publications.*

JOHANNINE WRITINGS.
Crown 8vo. 2s. 6d. net.
*Liverpool Diocesan Board of Divinity Publications.*

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO. LTD.
LONDON, NEW YORK, TORONTO, CALCUTTA, BOMBAY, AND MADRAS

# THE LIFE ETERNAL: HERE AND NOW

BY

ALEXANDER NAIRNE, D.D.
CANON OF ST. GEORGE'S, WINDSOR, AND
REGIUS PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY, CAMBRIDGE

"And ye poor Pilgrims that with restless toyl
Wearie your selves in wandring desart ways
Till that you come where ye your vowes assoyl.'
SPENCER, *Daphnaida*.

"S' io m' intuassi come tu t' immii."
DANTE, *Paradiso*.

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO. LTD.
39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C.4
NEW YORK, TORONTO
CALCUTTA, BOMBAY, AND MADRAS
1928

*Made in Great Britain*

144L
L.I.F.E. College Library
1100 Glendale Blvd.
Los Angeles, Calif. 90026

# PREFACE

I HAVE written this book with a practical aim. I have noticed how many good men and women, firm in the faith, have nevertheless been overwhelmed by bereavement, resigned but unhappy, the light of life gone out for them. It seems plain to me that S. John has a more than consolatory doctrine for such sorrow, that he gives another view of death and enables us to pass out of death into life, here and now, if we love the brethren. He brings the communion of saints into the foreground of experience, and offers abundant life and happiness which mortality does not impair; it becomes rather a means of fuller life than a fatality of separation.

And herein it seems, on reasonable consideration, that he is expressing the mind of Jesus Christ; and that such a reading of his Gospel is consonant with the creed of the Church.

Believing this, yet fancying that by no means all who are Christians accept the belief effectively, I have presumed to write. It may be that I have



032939

written superfluously; that every one knows as well as I do, many better, what I have tried to say. I am more afraid that I may have spoiled what it is not superfluous to say by my imperfect manner of saying it.

Have I read modern ideas into an ancient writer which he is unlikely to have had? Entirely to avoid such unscholarliness requires clear knowledge of who the writer was, when he lived and where; then of the whole life thought and literature of his place and period. For the Gospel according to S. John no one, however wide his learning however wise his criticism, can have that knowledge quite clear. But any one who ventures to interpret S. John is bound to have made strenuous effort to attain as much of that knowledge as possible.

I can only say that I have constantly read S. John for a long while: that I have read very many books about his Gospel: that I have brooded a good deal over the history and philosophy of the first two centuries. But I dare not claim to have done this completely.

Yet perhaps that need not stultify my effort. The last verse of the Gospel surely means (what E. A. Abbott says it means), that the evangelist refuses to limit the significance of his message to

the pages of a book, to the conditions of his own place time and education. Here as elsewhere the Spirit will in every age lead into fresh truth, from the implicit to the explicit. The ignorance or indolence which vitiates judgement may not be charged against one who appeals to the common sense of ingenuous readers for the plain message of S. John about the things which matter to the soul.

For like reason I have written with no apparatus of scholarship. The limitations of my book-learning would not have excluded copious references to authorities. The difficulty would have been to make proper acknowledgement of the almost infinite debt I owe to the many writers from whom my thoughts and statements are derived. And even then the acknowledgement would be unfair for these borrowings have suffered change in my adaptations. Consciously or unconsciously I have modified what I have used, sometimes perhaps to the point of contradiction. There will be found therefore in these pages none of those footnotes with precise references to authors books and chapters which afford delight and security to the scholarly reader. I write for plain people and appeal to their experience of things. They will more readily catch the

drift of these fragmentary essays if they read straight on.

But if some suspect my having read into this Gospel what is not there, others will perhaps complain that I have refused to accept what is there. They will say that I have reduced its glowing picture of a heavenly life to a vague shadow. The actual argument of my attempted exposition is the only answer I can offer. But I should like to offer for consideration something that Mr Bradley wrote in his last book and his last years. In *Appearance and Reality* he had discussed the question of immortality. Life, he said, is assured eternally. But whether man lives on, in his own self, beyond the change of death, cannot be assured: indeed little can be alleged for the likelihood. In *Essays on Truth and Reality* he answered criticisms of this utterance. He answered gently. First he said that of course he had not written with unkind intent. He too would gladly assert more if he could. It was not easier for him than for others to face the uncertainty of death. But, he added, here surely is where religion comes in, if we have a real religion: we face the trial in trust. Then he added more. He said that perhaps he would not speak now so abruptly as he had done: for

though it might seem a strange thing for one to say who had spent a whole life in the study of metaphysics, that study had led him more and more to take the concluding stanzas of Shelley's *Sensitive Plant* (about death being the most shadowy of all the shadows in which we seem to have our being) as no mere poet's fancy but most literal truth.

I quote from Mr Bradley the more readily because that great thinker is one of those from whom I have learned most towards (as I hope) a better understanding of the Johannine faith. With his I would gratefully and reverently join the names of Hort, Loisy, E. A. Abbott, J. A. Stewart, McTaggart, Tennyson. And I would add Dr. Inge the Dean of S. Paul's for his exposition of the persistence of Platonism in genuine Christianity ; and the Very Reverend D. Columba Marmion, Abbot of Maredsous Abbey, for his insistence on the ideal of Christ's perfection as the ideal of every Christian. And I must also name Mr Arthur Gray, Master of Jesus College Cambridge, whose too few writings and whose conversation have helped me almost more than any book in meditation on the Communion of Saints and S. John : and Mr Edward Vulliamy, from whose

pen I often quote a phrase which his pencil continually illustrates. To these "authorities" my debt is so continuous that I cannot but acknowledge it, though but in this general way.

I also thank the Principal of the Ladies' College Cheltenham for allowing me with singular liberality to print the Counsell Memorial Lecture for 1926 as chapter ix. in this book.

A. NAIRNE.

*Advent* 1927.

# CONTENTS


| | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| I. | The Pilgrimage of the Soul: Whence? Whither? Who? | 1 |
| II. | The Hypothesis of God: the One and Only: the Living God of the Old Testament | 9 |
| III. | Old Testament and New: out of Judaism but of a larger seed: Galilean Origin, Johannine Consummation | 17 |
| IV. | The Prophets and the purging of Sheol | 24 |
| V. | The Hope of Persecution: Maccabees and Platonists | 35 |
| VI. | The Galilean Gospel | 53 |
| VII. | S. Paul | 64 |
| VIII. | The Fiery Trial: 1 Peter Hebrews and Apocalypse | 74 |
| IX. | The Gospel of the Word: a Gospel of Youth for Youth | 81 |
| X. | The Communion of Saints | 108 |
| XI. | By Me to the Father | 127 |
| XII. | The Sacrifice | 151 |
| XIII. | "When that which drew from out the boundless deep turns again home" | 163 |

# I

## TONUS PEREGRINUS : THE PILGRIMAGE OF THE SOUL : WHENCE ? WHITHER ? WHO ?

WHENCE come we and for what ? Whither do we go ? This world is a fair place. The outward show of things which we call nature is beautiful and affords pleasure to all men. It seems a noble pleasure, a pleasure for the mind. Mind seems to be dominant in all our interests, and there are many interests in men's brief lives. All is marred by much suffering ; but just because the worst part of that is its affinity with what we term evil we are allowed to cherish hope of relieving sorrow by improving morals. Such commonplaces need no rehearsal. The balance appears that life is worth living ; therefore worth understanding ; and the attempt to understand reveals a further worthiness, a wonder and a mystery of which we are ourselves a part ; wonder the mother of philosophy, the soul of man naturally Christian.

But this life comes to an end. Indeed it lasts too short a while for a vivacious person to accomplish half his activities. What means death ? Does death end life or do we go on living after we

die? Do we fall asleep and wake again? When? How? Will the waking be sweet or glorious or terrible? Are there any means at all for answering such questions?

All thoughtful persons have considered this. A review of their confessions would show that the strongest and most honest thinkers have either decided that there are no means, or that the only means is revelation. And revelation, if interpreted broadly, is an expression reasonably to be allowed. That awareness of the wonder of life which comes from attempting to understand life is by revelation. Mind communes with mind: our minds, not quite separately but as we are united and enlarged by communion with one another, find that the whole in which we are contained is better and more mindful than ourselves; and reflexion assures us that it would be strange if it were otherwise. If there is a containing and vivifying whole it cannot be dead while we enjoy a very rich life.

Thus the narrow question, Do mortals live eternally? broadens into new form. It belongs to the wider question, What is the essence of life altogether: what or whom do all and each of us depend upon? There would appear to be two main lines of approaching this question. One is to lay down a large hypothesis, to build thereupon, and test the superstructures. The other is to start from experience and seek a complete ex-

planation. The hypothesis has generally been designated God. The name is reverend and generates a temper in enquirers important for fulness of truth. But if God mean all the name ought to mean, all experiences are divinely originated and the search too may be holy. Plato may be taken as type of all such seekers.

He starts us from ourselves. There is in men a principle of life, a soul. Is there? Yes; the scientific people of his day agreed on that: the soul the breath of life is real certainly. Plato's master Socrates cared for science, for knowing, chiefly as knowing what is morally good. Life for him was good honourable life. The soul was the breath of that kind of life, the life indeed. His formal arguments—soul indestructible because uncompounded and simple in itself, soul immortal because itself the cause of life, etc.—take on force when the moral aspect of all this is remembered. All comes to this: men as living souls subsist in that supreme "idea" of goodness which is the eternity and deity and absolute being of all that is, has been, or ever shall be. Therefore the one business of each man is to take care of his soul that the soul, which is all that really means the man, may be as good as possible. He who thus lives may trust the mystery of death as he trusts the power of goodness in the common life of to-day: no harm can happen to a good man; and being such a mystery death may perhaps, or very

likely, open the gate to a better life than here and now.

Socrates would, indeed did claim that he knew this by way of revelation. He knew he knew it because he knew it so clearly. He tried by clearing the confused notions of morality in men's minds to make them know it as he did. So far as he takes us we are compelled by plain reason to go with him. Such immortality of the soul as he argued he surely proved. Is it enough? For a truly religious man who trusts God it surely is. But it is difficult to be content to be religious, and further particular precise questions are insistent. Is it Plato who goes beyond Socrates with those myths of judgement and cycles of new life? They are but probable stories, he says: they do but adumbrate imaginatively the consequence of conduct, the divine way of making men better even in spite of themselves. Or those just outlined hopes of meeting the wise and good and heroic in some happy state—Socrates' own these surely are, but how restrained his fancy is: it may be so but he asserts it not, and (what is very noticeable) he scarcely says anything about such hope of converse with his private friends. Immortality is certain. How and with what conditions we know not. We do know all will be well. He claims no second bests, he trusts the One, the best of all.

Thus he assures us. I think he calms us. And

his very restraint and reticence open a door of possibility for so much more than he does assert. Where reason, Logos, the divine Word checks, wonder breaks into light.

Take a modern instance now. James Ward in his *Psychological Principles* (which means preliminary thoughts about the Soul) carries us strictly along the process of expansion and then —breaks off at an open door, a possible view of a further road outside, which may lead infinitely far. This is the process. What impression a new-born babe may take from its surroundings no one can tell. But observation shews that it soon learns it has a body ; it becomes conscious of its own body. It distinguishes this body from other bodies with which it has to do. It distinguishes among these other bodies ; some shew more some less of the feelings its own has : and in classifying thus a mind is just dimly stirring in the babe ; he is almost conscious of his own consciousness. That quickly grows to something more, something still continuous yet different. He knows persons, and desires and affections work in him and he learns to work upon the like in those others. Continuously the education of mind goes on, marked by points of novelty, the most remarkable of which is mastery of speech : now at last spirit stands in presence of spirit and the real work of life begins. Not merely body is the

interest now but something more intimate which we call self. And self soon becomes imperious. The needs of self are the impulse for all activity. Yet it presently appears that the desires of the particular self will not be gained except by considering the desires of other selves. There must be obedience, yielding, willing mutuality. Nor does immediate indulgence of obvious need satisfy. There must be a looking forward and a calculation. And the scope of calculation enlarges. There is much difference in what we choose for ourselves. Right and wrong and all such kindred notions have a claim that will not be silenced: here is moral sense, another point of novelty. And then another, more deeply charactered: not for the sake of moral law but for affection to some persons, we deny our selves. Thus the quite natural selfishness continuously breeds unselfishness, and a strange vista of immeasurable nobilities opens for the self or soul. We must take care of our soul that it may become as good as possible.

But taking care of the soul means a very different kind of consciousness from what we started with.

For see. You began by feeling your own body. Then you looked forth on other bodies. Then you began to work upon them by means of something more than body. Outward you looked, and by degrees were turned to look inward with a

new attention. A new idea was presented. It is worth while to contemplate your own most precious possession. You are learning to do this with more and more intelligence. You set your own soul over against whom ? There indeed is the soul you contemplate : but who are you ?

Ah ! who are you, your very self of self ? In the old Greek use of the term a man's soul was hardly recognised till the moment when he lost it : at death the soul went forth into the air. As we press to ultimate analysis we are wiled back to a position not unlike that. By ourselves we never find ourselves. Self emerges through intercommunication. Absorbing from other selves, giving itself out to other selves, our own self is there for it is at work. Is death a supreme instance of this passing away and being found in the one very self which is the all ? The very self of self ; can there be more than one that is, is like that, is perfectly and eternally ? Whatever Plato says here or there, picturesquely, it would seem that in his innermost heart he believed that. He knew how difficult it was to preserve the many and at the same time to hold firm to the abiding one. But he ever comes back, drives through, to the faith which even he could not clear up : the one must ever be ; else all reality (which is goodness) would dissolve. He believed the whole more important than the parts. And so all platonists, conscious or unconscious, plain men

or philosophers, Christians or otherwise. On the other side stand those who feel that the one certainty they possess is, I am I. Through all change and chance, with or in spite of logic, a man cannot doubt of his own self: no sane man can: the many must be more ultimate than the one: God is the sum of souls: creation is a reflex activity: immortality is nothing if it be not personal, and personal in some sense that present experience guarantees. A gallant faith, as the other is loyal: both may be graced by humility or stultified by pride.

## II

### THE HYPOTHESIS OF GOD : THE ONE AND ONLY GOD : THE LIVING GOD OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE Cambridge platonists of the 17th century—men in whom the peace of God lodged as in a little sanctuary during those raging times—would have seen revelation in such wondering reason as we have been considering. "The natural knowledge of religion is as spiritual as any knowledge that belongs to us. . . . When the principles of our religion become the temper of our spirits, then we are truly religious ; and the only way to make them become so is to reason ourselves into an approbation of them : for nothing which is the reason of things can be refused by the reason of man ; when understood. . . . To go against reason is to go against God : it is the self same thing to do that which the reason of the case doth require, and that which God himself doth appoint : reason is the divine governor of man's life ; it is the very voice of God." Thus Benjamin Whichcote in his Aphorisms. These men, as their name implies, turned from the scholastic divinity of Laudians and Puritans to the ancient philosophy. "A

Greek in the Temple" was the title of the "Commonplace" which marks the beginning of the movement. But they only paid attention to a few of the pagan authors, those in fact who were not pagan; and if they neglected the Christian Fathers, they set the New Testament quite above all other wisdom.

Indeed there is in Christianity something dominant over all other forms of revelation. And this already appears, however widely outlined, in the record of Israel's faith, which was the visible source of definite Christianity.

Turn to "The Burning Bush" in Exodus. You will instinctively divide it into paragraphs as you read the story aloud. These will correspond with the variations in the name of God; Jahveh and Elohim, in the English version "the LORD" and "God." In the Jahveh paragraphs there is a visible miracle, the burning bush, and Jahveh speaks with a rhetoric grand yet naïve, ending with a very human promise that Israel shall, when they depart from Egypt, spoil the Egyptians. In the Elohim paragraphs there is no visible manifestation. Out of the solemnity of the forest God speaks unseen. God speaks briefly authoritatively divinely. As at another time to Jacob, the unseen remains unnamed. "You ask my name? I am that I am. Being that, I send thee for the assured deliverance of my people." And as we read we do obeisance to the

one true God. From that centre all radiates in the Bible. This is the other method, not the platonic; this is the large hypothesis. But how much more. It is not presented as hypothesis, but as the one indisputable principle of thought, and a necessity compelling man to adore and obey. The whole sequent history, Old and New Testament and all that has happened since, is proof and illustration. "God is Spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth": "I am that I am": the only God: and, at least while we read, we doubt not that this God most verily is.

Can this be paralleled elsewhere? Hardly. Yet notice that nothing here is unique; all is continuous. The very form of the word Elohim testifies to crude origins. The elohim were once the spirits of the wild. This is the religion of nature purified and deepened. And yet again, the purity and depth is the real religion, not the mere awe and mystery: here all is moral and reasonable, a new start for goodness in a sad and violent world. This is salvation.

The Jahveh paragraphs have more obvious connexion with the outside world. Jahveh is personal national. As the nations have each their own God, so Jahveh will now be Israel's God. But prophets lawyers psalmists and the discipline of life will purify and deepen that idea also. It will be assimilated with the other,

entailing gain, perhaps some loss: is the compound narrative in Exodus as good as the simple narrative of the Elohistic historian once was? At any rate in the "Comfort ye" prophecy of Isaiah we do see a most religious growth. The old name is kept and with the name the vivid personal emotion. But the conditions are purged away: patriotism is raised to theology: our translation "the Lord" is just right: this is the "one God maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible" of the Nicean creed. The synthesis is more poetic than philosophic: as generally, theology enjoys its kinship with art and tends to inner unity through outward variety of sometimes seeming inconsistencies.

Such carelessness of obvious inconsistency is to be observed in Ezekiel. In Ezekiel words are put into the mouth of Jahveh which have shocked literal consciences in modern times; as though Jahveh himself led Israel on in pagan courses that so, cup of iniquity filled full, he might at last with justice destroy his people. But these dramatic sentences may not be taken by themselves. They move in a large context. Ezekiel is philosophically concerned with moral law. In law he saw most clearly a revelation of God. God is to Ezekiel far more than a grand person, national or imperial. He conceives God also as idea, and a large part of that idea is the actual law of facts as they go on: "Things are not to conform to our

apprehensions but our thoughts are to answer things." It is a thing, a fact, that a course of evil leads to inveterate habit. It is a thing, a fact, that the sins of parents are visited upon the children. Here is law natural and therefore divine, which was observed by Ezekiel as it had been by others. But Ezekiel considers law philosophically, as it is an attribute of God, as it becomes in its life within the Godhead. And there he sees it subsumed and transcended in its real context. "Why will ye die? O turn to me," he hears from the heart of the great true God in whom a nation's tragedy has taught him to believe. In this goodwill of the whole God, God maturely revealed, he finds the partial law can be and has been rescinded. When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed and doeth that which is lawful and right, no separate natural law prevents him from salvation. Here is the meaning of Ezekiel's complete theology; in which, as in the world of experience whereby it is moulded, inconsistencies of process prove no offence to one who comprehends the unity.

A like caution must be applied to the Old Testament as a whole. It is a whole. We have awoke in the past or passing generation of criticism to the interest of its parts: a library rather than a book, we call it. But it is a book, a "bible" or "edited" collection of records new and old and

various in character. The editors, the doctors of the post-exilic Jewish Church, have impressed the seal of the Church's faith upon the whole, making the variety live anew in the unity. There is plenty (faithfully preserved by them) in the Old Testament to shew how near to pagan habits Israel's conversation was while the monarchy was making history and one by one the prophets attempted, single-handed and with conspicuous failure, to uphold a true religion. But this ingrained stain will affect those only who read too much by parts. If read continuously the Old Testament shews not merely progressive revelation, but revelation already near completion at each point; the standing background of the series; the picture there within; the idea informing the history. And the opening chapter, the Hymn of Creation at the beginning of the Law, seems to have been set there deliberately as a creed to regulate all that follows. When Jahveh breaks into rhetoric "at the Bush" and concludes with the spoiling of the Egyptians, we are to remember that Jahveh here is the same as Elohim in the Hymn, and keep common sense, and enjoy the spirited piece of drama: yet with reverence and awe. Truth is where words point, not just as they are at the moment heard. The letter is indeed sacramental, but the Spirit is ultimate, and he alone uses sacrament religiously who keeps in mind the goal beyond it.

This purpose in so placing the Hymn of Creation is but conjecturally to be inferred. That is the happy law of freedom which restrains as it encourages all literary criticism. Allow the conjecture as not improbable, and then consider who those editors were who did this thing, and how they were led in their whole course of editing. I imagine they were men like the Ezra of whom we read in Ezra and Nehemiah. Learned men and fond of books, but pious men who were fond of worship and found health in sharing the worship of rich and poor, wise and simple, old and young. The Jewish Bible was written out by the doctors of the schools, but it took shape, as by unconscious growth, in the synagogue : it is the flower of worship.

Hence it has two characteristic features. First it is a work of art ; that is, the handiwork of practical artists, not a highly finished production advertising itself as artistic. It is natural unaffected, done by trained instinct, not by rule and theory. That accounts for its inconsistencies, abruptnesses, even what seem uglinesses to eyes not educated in the various yet fastidious, the careless carefulness of the craftsman. Secondly it is reverent. " Lustre of a pious life, unpolished integrity " is how a noble yet faulty character of the 17th century has been described. That lustre of piety illuminates the Old Testament : it burns therein. We do it wrong

by resting in our criticisms, as though criticism were an end in itself, or an approach to be entered upon without prayer and awe. The use of the Bible in our search for life is the Practice of the Presence of God. That is the peculiar contribution which this book makes to the general philosophy of the world. The contribution is right reasonable. We begin to be biblical scholars when we perceive that there is logic in the power of the Bible upon the mind. It would not be so if the name God were superfluous or had a synonym.

## III

### OLD TESTAMENT AND NEW : OUT OF JUDAISM BUT OF A LARGER SEED : GALILEAN ORIGIN, JOHANNINE CONSUMMATION

THE Christian revelation is continuous with this of Israel, as emerging out of it without interruption, by renewal not by novelty ; and as being in the same direct line into which parallels from all sides are attracted. In Israel the meditative prophecy of Ezekiel just noticed is a hint of such attraction. As we read the Writings, that third division of the Hebrew Bible which especially reflects the habit of the post-exilic church, we observe it going on at large. The children of Javan or Ionia and the wisdom of the far East confront and influence the provincial Judeans and the whole expanding mind of man contributes to Jewish faith. But indeed this had begun earlier. Merely exclusive Israel had never been nor has ever lastingly become. After the ruin of Barcochba hardship drove the rabbinical school in upon itself : before the middle ages begin Maimonides has his precursors in science. What is the significance of the book of Jonah holding

place in the second division of the Jewish Bible, the Prophets? It is more like a story than a prophecy, and it is more like the Midrash or fanciful story of the Chronicler than the prophetic history of Kings. Yet there it stands among the early prophetic books, witnessing to the same kind of early prophetic breadth of piety as made Isaiah foretell the day when Israel should be a third with Assyria and Egypt in trusting Jahveh. Jonah is coming to its own again to-day; a happy sign of the times. For Jonah tells of the forgiveness of sin, of the patience of the Most Merciful, of the goodness of human nature and how the heart of even tyrant empires can be touched, of the general ignorance which must be compassionated and the kindred frailty of man and beast: it is a picture of the Servant of the Lord whom, though unwilling, the love of Christ constrains to open the eyes of the world to a special revelation of peace.

Never the less there was a Jewish church within its own proper pale and the Gospel grew out of it, though the whole world had enlarged the preparation and was at that very time waiting for the appearance of the Gospel. The desire of the nations was at its height, but had still to wait a while. The Gospel sprang from a provincial fountain-head, and as we trace its course through the New Testament we find the old story of the gradual broadening of Israel repeated with a higher

hope. First Galilee, then Jerusalem; and a Saviour who says that he is not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Of late this original narrowness has been anew insisted upon. But attractive as Albert Schweitzer's pioneering has been to English scholarship, many who were swept away by his piety and confidence are looking round about again and thinking that after all the horizon stretched further even from the first. Not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel: yes, but the Lord said also that the Son of man must give his life as a ransom for the many. And that was a more tragic oracle and sounds oracular indeed, while the other has a ring of irony as though to provoke the responsive question, But wilt thou not go further? Galilee was Galilee of the Gentiles and on its imperial high-road saw much that was not merely Jewish. And Luke in that gravely charming tales-of-a-grandfather style in which he relates the beginnings both of Gospel and of apostolic Acts—the beginnings which he learned by hearsay from simple people—impresses upon his readers the very catholic temper of those "quiet in the land" of the hill country of Judah among whom he imagines the Gospel cradled—*in patrios fontes et ad incunabula nostra*. And when Clio is once more saluted as a muse and history followed as a story which explicates a meaning, Luke will regain his proper credit. His facts are not so plain as

Mark's but he has more of them. He has a larger collection from the earliest traditions. He has also a later set from the early apostolic, and he saw how these rose out of those. He understands the continuity and promise of history, and his work has that previsionary penetration which distinguishes faithful genius from faithful memory. No one who tells of past events can repeat exactly what happened. If he prides himself on doing that strictly and no more he perforce deceives. What he should rather do is to form a clear purpose for the sake of which he tells his story and (of course avoiding false invention) select arrange and let the colour shine in such manner as will suit his purpose. The value of Mark is that he does represent immediate memory so far as he goes. Only unconsciously (though unconsciously he must) does he reshape his naïve memories to a plan. The purpose of Luke was to shew the meaning of Christianity in its origin its first developement and its promise. And he shews how far beyond reformed or perfected Judaism it was growing.

Whom or what ever the designation "Luke" stands for, that stage in our documents ends for all practical purposes with the Roman period of S. Paul. The Pastoral Epistles and the persecution group, 1 Peter Hebrews Apocalypse, carry us on to what was hidden from the experience of S. Paul and Luke his friend. Here we

have maturer reflexion on the person of Christ, the essential meaning of the advent hope, its relation to present trials and duties, the place which bodily death must take in the Christian scheme, the application to Christian habits of Judaic picture-language and Hellenic modes of expression. We are nearing the close of the apostolic century, and the New Testament is about to reach its consummation in the Epistle and Gospel called S. John's.

I am writing these brief essays because I believe that Gospel and Epistle to be really the consummation. Perhaps the Gospel according to S. John is far from an accurately historical record of the earthly life of the Lord. The deviation from such accuracy may be different from the freedom just noted in Luke. That is the handling of a historian. This may be the liberty claimed by a writer of romance. Let the best sense be put upon that term. And let us leave critical questions alone, at least for the present. I think there will be no need to go far into critical questions at all. We cannot get much beyond guesses. My own faith is that this matters little if we are satisfied that the author truly fulfils a purpose of publishing what his living Lord revealed to him. His living Lord is our still living Lord; and in communion with his mind the real essence of Christianity moves.

This is not limited by the tradition of the Jewish

church; the truth of the Gentiles is also taken into it. Nor is it limited by any external form: its everlasting principles are capable of infinite variety in expression as time and place still make occasion. It is a wholly reasonable faith which must in the end supersede all rhetoric even the noblest. It is a faith proving itself by present experience and needs no vaticinations of another world. To know the Father as only true God, and to learn to know him through the Lord Jesus whom he sent, is eternal life. This is a Gospel of pure spirit, and spirit is love: our English "love" hardly represents the austere tenderness, the contentment, of the Gospel word, though it ought to and perhaps will when this Gospel regains its right. Hitherto it has had its right but intermittently. Suspected when it first appeared, it was presently accepted on condition of being explained according to the general mind of the practical church. Origen saw that its value lay in its differences from the earlier parts of the New Testament, not in its agreement; as of course it does agree on first principles and the outline of the creed. But Origen was distrusted as this Gospel itself had been, and only from time to time has one here and another there reasserted its genuine supremacy. But the signs of the times now opening are for it. Not one or two but a whole generation seems to be pressing questions to which this Gospel has the plain

answer. The plain answer, not the easy answer. This Gospel is profound; but it is plain. To receive the immense assurance it offers we only need to accept its plain words in their plain sense. That sense is often startling but it is apostolic: it is what the New Testament has throughout been leading towards. This completion explains what calls for explanation in the origins, in the process of the history, in the assimilations from outside, in the purging of what was intimate to the faith from survivals ornaments or integuments. A great simplicity results, which is profundity. The picture within is here discovered, the mind of Christ informing every-day life.

## IV

### THE PROPHETS AND THE PURGING OF SHEOL

And now, reader, do you see where I would go with you? We start with trite questions about ourselves, our life death and what may be beyond death. At once we perceive that these questions cannot be answered in their first crude form. We must enlarge them and consider what we mean by God and goodness and eternal life. Then we see that if reason rules in things as we experience things, it is reasonable to hope for that deep answer to deep questions which we call revelation; for goodness is a reasonable idea and God is a reasonable name. Idea and Person, search and adoration: there are two ways, but already these first tentative preludings point to the two ways being ultimately one. Whenever in any context we say "God," the conflict between idea and person disturbs the mind. Whenever any men have known God the harmony which is worth precedent conflict supervenes.

Have any men anywhere thus known God? In various times and places there do seem to have been some, one here one there; but no long list

could be made. This is remarkable however: be these rare persons philosophers heroes or what not, their plain honest goodness appears to be their secret, not their other kinds of eminence. And that makes us wonder whether the list might not be indefinitely enlarged by an "item anonymi" at the end; everywhere, in all religions, a multitude of the "quiet in the land" have thought little about themselves and have journeyed through life sojourning with God at home in heaven.

It may be so. We whose inheritance is Christendom, remember one such company who lived in that great peace during one rather brief period, and we are apt to fancy no exact parallel can be discovered elsewhere. These were the apostolic Christians. We know about them from the New Testament. The record rings true for it does not make out even this primitive fellowship to have been perfect. It does tell how they aimed at perfection and believed it to be possible and obligatory: all defections were unchristian and needed immediate recovery. But recovery was possible, as the strange faculty was (if only they would trust enough) available. And faculty and recovery came to them through their Master Jesus who had perfectly lived as they nearly lived; whose memory was fragrant and powerful, whose Spirit (for he lived on eternally) was the life that lived through them all, though as yet

none of them lived that full life wholly. He was their human master to whom in memory they were loyal; and he was the idea of goodness which permeated transformingly their every-day world.

Select mystics among Moslems Buddhists Hindus may cherish a creed not altogether unlike this. But would those who know these select mystics best, would the mystics of those creeds themselves, assert essential likeness? The multitude of apostolic Christians would not have expressed their theology just as I have tried to sketch it in the paragraph above, but their expression would have been better not slighter; and the whole multitude would have understood, not select mystics only.

Nor would the partial coincidence of Moslems Buddhists and Hindus have troubled them. To some it might have been a puzzle, not worth anxiety. If so near us, will they not the sooner join us? they would be content in their practical way to answer. There were others, simplest souls of all I fancy, who would have answered with a more childlike profundity: The master said, I am the Truth; therefore the strangers you tell us of seem friends of the Master also. These would have been, as the story goes, S. John's parishioners at Ephesus who had heard in their worship the doctrine which we read in the written Gospel according to S. John. And

these were the fore-runners of the generation now to-day growing up among ourselves.

That, good reader, is whither you and I are tending in our present conferences. Christianity according to S. John, the crown of apostolic developement, the world-wide reasonable faith: we would meditate on that together. But if so, we must try to see how indeed it is the crown of continuous developement. It is, put shortly, the doctrine of eternal life here and now. It comes from our Lord Jesus of the earlier Gospels. It is unfolded, it is tested, it grows, through Paul and his successors. Looking backwards we discern it in Israel and Israel's Law Prophets and Psalms.

Our 7th Article of religion says that "both in Old and New Testament eternal life is offered to mankind through Christ" and "they are not to be heard which feign that the old fathers looked only for temporal promises." This is masculine theology and seems right if eternal life be understood in the Johannine sense as life in God, not as life beyond the grave.

The old fathers are the Old Testament saints and especially the patriarchs of Genesis. Their story comes to us through historians who wrote in the period of the Prophets and were imbued with the prophetic faith of the 9th century. They restrain their pens and draw the picture in large outline only, giving impression of having modified the tradition of earlier days chiefly by pruning

away extravagancies. When we reach with them the revelation at the Burning Bush they evidently mean to tell us what they considered the very heart of Israel's faith. The plagues of Egypt may be legend which they repeated as such. But "I am the God of Abraham of Isaac and of Jacob" is very different. Our Lord never found occasion to quote the plagues, but he quoted this when he would declare the inmost and abiding truth of the doctrine of resurrection. This, he said, is the doctrine of Moses, the doctrine of the Law: God is the God of the living; all live unto him.

Therefore I think we may suppose that these historians give us more than their own faith read back into the past. They preserve something from ancient tradition in what they sketch of the mind of the patriarchs about this question of eternal life and the relation of bodily death thereto. And these historians are the more to be trusted in that they do not give any definite utterances of the patriarchs on the subject. They do make us feel pretty clearly that this was their contented trust; namely that here, in this earthly life we are but pilgrims and sojourners, this is no abiding state; yet even here we are sojourning with God, guests of his tent, and when we die we go to God, and that is enough.

Historical comparison teaches us, may be, that such simple profundity is not the rule in early religions. I sometimes wonder whether history

is so exact a science that it can establish such laws without exceptions, and whether the biblical claim for this " peculiar people " may not be in plain historical fact a notable exception. But the safer guess is rather this : that profundity, simplicity, real faith, has been the actual exception in all times places and religions. Not a whole people but rare choice souls in every people have known the living God, and depended on his life and been at peace. The Old Testament lingers on these choice souls, and—here is the glory of its inspiration—recognises in them and not in the sad and absurd vulgar, the reality of human nature.

Any how herein is true religion for all time. To that our Lord comes back. So does S. Paul, though he had other things also to say. So does S. John, insisting quietly that none of the other things are needful. If you know the Father through his perfect Son, that is eternal life, and you need take no further thought for the morrow.

But it is not easy to be thus content. Questions press. What happens after death ? Shall we sleep and wake again ? What of the body, or at any rate what of that separate self which the body symbolises or secures ? If that goes how can our love for one another persist actively ? or justice be done, the saints vindicated of their oppressors ? Whether it be ten years or a hundred, said the old-fashioned Jew in the second

century, there is no inquisition in the grave; but there is a divinely appointed rest for all and the weary and the failures may enjoy it. But he was protesting when he wrote that against the novel doctrine of the Pharisees of his day, that many who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake at the last great day, the day of the kingdom of the Saints, the day of judgement, when justice shall be done at last, the righteous shine like stars and the tyrants inherit shame and everlasting contempt.

That Pharisaic faith was the flower from another seed, which all modern students of the Old Testament agree in finding in the most primitive soil of Israel. The patriarchal quietude may be due to fancy, this is most real and certain.

Indeed the Old Testament is woven through and through with the notion of Sheol, that shadowy life in the grave, the pit, the land without light or law, where the dead do go on living, but are cut off from the hand, the care, the love of God. No doubt this was the popular belief of Israelites, and the Old Testament faithfully displays that fact. But the Old Testament does not endorse it as faith. It was the superstition inherited from pagan ancestors and shared with pagan neighbours. The great prophets set their face against it. From the first of these the doctrine of one true God and only one begins to be proclaimed. By the time of the exile the doctrine

is full and sure in the "Comfort ye" prophecy. To these prophets there was no state or place outside the loving care of God: if Sheol meant that it meant falsehood. The faith of the prophets is the faith of the whole Old Testament. That is the important signification of the critical epigram, Prophets before Law. The Old Testament is a record of facts and one of its facts is that the early Israelites held a pagan superstition of Sheol. It is also a declaration of faith and its faith is: Eternal life in the living God.

Yet faith developes and facts affect developement and there is a touch of reason even in ugly facts. Sheol did point a way to answer some of those questions which a restless faith will ask. Sheol suggested the continuance of personal interests, judgement, retribution. Read Job, and whether you read it as antique or as modernising Judaism, that idea is evident. There is at least some reason (in spite of weight and worth of scholarship on the other side) for taking Job more subtly than obviously. For when the book of Job was written the crude superstition of Sheol was passing away. The victory of the prophets had been won. The post-exilic church confessed the prophetic creed and advanced upon it. The old language of Sheol was allowed again because it no longer meant the old popular superstition. In the apocalyptic passage of Isaiah (xxvi. ff.) a poetry of resurrection is heard. At the

end of Daniel this has become a dogma of resurrection and judgement. S. Paul writing to Thessalonians and Corinthians stands in this line of inheritance.

But how remarkably he breaks out of the line. In 1 Cor. xv. he just sketches broadly the traditional Jewish scenery of the Last Day, but he touches and leaves it and far outruns it with his new-born visionary faith. "The trumpet shall blow": yes, it shall blow, but not literally and materially. The aweful change shall then come: that is the meaning of the ancient picture. The body shall be raised, but not this flesh and blood; all is far deeper holier satisfying; for all is of the Spirit. There will be judgement: yes; but beyond judgement is "the end," and the end is not judgement distinction separation, but God shall be all in all.

Paul goes forward. And going forward he recovers the more venerable grandeur of genuine Isaianic prophecy. And within the Old Testament itself just such returning advance is again and again to be observed. As David desired and Solomon dared to change the old nomadic cult of Elohim who dwelt in the wide heavens from horizon to horizon, and to build Jahveh a house: as an elaborate institutional religion grew up once or twice and yet again therefrom: and as nevertheless we find return repeatedly made to the absolute ideal of the patriarchs and

prophets—" When that which drew from out the boundless deep turns again home "—so it has been with this eminent aspect of religion, the question of indissoluble life. There are two lines : eternal life in God and a life beyond the grave. It sometimes seems as though we have to choose on which of the two lines we will venture our faith. If succession in time and the finding of our personal selves and the vindication of justice are necessary to our belief in right and wrong and to our scheme of a reasonable universe of life, then we must choose the line of life beyond. If time the concomitant of growth, the guarantee of consequence, mean less to us than does the eternal immutable basis of all that is or can be ; if consciousness of self balks our desire of illimitable peace in God ; if " all is one " mean more to us than " every one is responsible " can mean ; if love not justice seems to us ultimate, and if the possible immensity of love can only be by love's passing beyond the horizons of known relationships : then we are bound to choose the vague faith of the patriarchs " to know God is eternal life." These are the alternatives of our desire. And our desire has a meaning. It is part of our nature " wonderfully created and yet more wonderfully restored." But desire is imaginative private human. Reason is more stable, kin to the divine. For one alternative is there not a " must " ; for the other " perhaps " remains and

*O si utinam.* One is the prayer of asking, the other of silence, of union.

Yet both are prayer. And the more we read and think and gain experience, the clearer we perceive that we are not forced to the dilemma. In Old Testament and New, in all the meditative literature of the world, in the plain experience of honest life, the two lines come together. Yet not as equals. Eternal life dominates. Life beyond is a criticism. Eternal life is vague, apt to be held easily because dreamily. Life beyond stimulates precision, sets concrete questions, obliges to activity instead of quiet. Eternal life is meditative, life beyond touches the imagination of the toiling multitude: *labor in via in patria quies.*

## V

### THE HOPE OF PERSECUTION: MACCABEES AND PLATONISTS

THE book of Daniel is a consolation for persecuted saints. It is to the Old Testament what the Apocalypse of John the divine is to the New. Both are apocalypses or revelations of the last days, the great Advent, the coming of the Kingdom of God and of his saints. We need not be too anxious to settle dates. The Apocalypse in the New Testament in the final form in which we read it is perhaps the last edition of a consolation which had already served in earlier persecutions and was read again in the fierce days of Domitian. The book of Daniel seems almost certainly to belong to the time when Antiochus Epiphanes the Syrian King tried, in the second century B.C., to hellenise the Jews. The books of the Maccabees represent his action as very drastic: he really tried to overthrow the true religion altogether and turn the Jews into pagans. The first book of the Maccabees is good history, but good history may still be one-sided; and it is rather surprising that Antiochus should have

found such general support or at least submission as for a while he did.

But it is little to our purpose here to go into critical or historical disputes. The plain fact, to our purpose, is this: Antiochus did rouse a very zealous resistance, and the Maccabees, led by Judas Maccabeus son of the priest Mattathias, with the Covenanters who followed him, fought like lions against imperial armies and were victorious, as the book of Daniel promised they should be.

They were victorious, but they lived in the moors and mountains, with their lives in their hands, and laying down their lives freely. They were "saints" and "covenanters" like the Scottish saints in *Old Mortality*. Another picture of their heroism, of their "faith" is to be seen in the latter part of the 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews; men of whom the world was not worthy wandering and hiding in dens and holes, tempted tortured slain, expecting the better resurrection.

So it always is. Persecution is a mighty stimulant of faith in resurrection. It calls for courage to face death. But courage can be learned. When a man knows how to do a thing he thinks less of the danger that attends the doing; his whole heart is in the achievement: and they who face death every hour get the secret of defying death. Part of that secret is an

intenser joy in life that is life indeed, and of such life such men do commonly feel assured that it lasts beyond death. Nothing is more impressive in the Apocalypse of John than the populous heaven there depicted: thousands are there in rest and glory and still they come thither out of the tribulation. We are the more sensible of this when we compare the companion treatise, the Epistle to the Hebrews. There too are the spirits of just men made perfect and the cloud of witnesses: but the cloud is the suitable image, the vivid reality of imagination is peculiar to the Apocalypse. Both Hebrews and Apocalypse look beyond the present to the end when all shall have come home. But how restrained is the "not without us" of Hebrews compared with "and the nations shall walk in the light thereof" of the Apocalypse. That indeed surpasses Daniel and the Maccabees and shews how nobly Christian charity transformed Jewish imagination. But all is imaginative with a frank simplicity. For persecution impels faith along its imaginative line. Bodily resurrection, throne set, books open, the divine assize: armies of heaven, by the still waters, harpers harping, all tears wiped away: the walls of the Covenanters' house of faith are hung with distinctly coloured tapestry.*

* "For God knowing that the great hopes of man, the biggest endearment of religion, the sanction of private justice, the band of piety and holy courage, does wholly

And still, in every generation, quiet thinkers are ashamed in the even tenor of their way when they fall in with those whose lot on earth is hard and their hope of heaven proportionately intense. "We go to God and that is enough" seems a cowardly refusal: to reduce a brother's bolder assurance to such resignation seems immoral.

And yet what do we know? Did even John the divine mean us to take his pictured vision literally? And how can it be taken literally? What do the pictures mean? Their value, which is tremendous active effective, lies in their meaning, deeply stirring. These several pictures are not the picture within. "The visions are transparencies of what are for us abstractions, but were for the ancient world concrete, if ideal realities, and not accounts of material supernatural happenings." So Dr John Oman in that remarkable re-arrangement of *The Book of Revelation* (Cambridge University Press 1923) in which I am more than inclined to believe that he has really recovered an original vision wherein

derive from the article of the resurrection; was pleased not only to make it credible, but easy and familiar to us: and we so converse every night with the image of death that every morning we find an argument of the resurrection."

Jeremy Taylor at Archbishop Bramhall's funeral, July 16, 1663, after the years of civil war in which men had gone with life at daily hazard and proved by keen experience "the perils and dangers" of the nights. This experience is deeply engraven in the seventeenth century Book of Common Prayer, as is the Maccabean temper in the Psalter.

platonic faith is assimilated to semitic fantasy. In his *Apocalypse* Archbishop Benson had already guessed nobly something of what Oman substantiates.

We commonly remark that the apocalypses hold out a prospect of another world beyond this world in which we act and suffer, a there over against the here as well as a then over against the now. This we also say is the fatal error of philosophies as well as of religion : it is the fallacious recourse to mythology. Is not this too severe ? Is it not to demand of language more than language can give ? For language is built of images from time and space and it seems all but impossible to express in words that excursion beyond the things of sense which perhaps can be made in the dim movement of the silent mind. The utmost that can be done in this kind is to draw the imagery itself " from the operations of the human mind," and even so it must be added " or from those external actions by which they are expressed." Two heralds one day conversed about the symbolic function of their science. They discussed especially a certain shield on which all the bearings are " counterchanged." That night one of them had a dream in which this oracle was given him in those dream-words which are not words : The consonance is perfect, except for rhetoric. And so it is. We are aware of the real consonance : one world, as one God. But

when we talk we have to talk as if there were two: two worlds, here and there; two Gods, personal and impersonal. The art of philosophy and theology is to simplify rhetoric.

Dr J. A. Stewart, the Oxford platonist, writes somewhere of the platonic "idea," that it is as when, contemplating some fair scene for the hundredth time, this time we see into it as never before: all comes into one, and a perfect harmony and meaning and delight overwhelms the distinguishing eye and the analysing mind: as though from another world the idea descends. "As though from another world." We know that such an expression must have its "as though." We also know that the task of the exact talker is to get rid of the "as though" truthfully. We suspect that the task is endless, yet it is possible to approximate more and more closely to the end.

Plato knew that to be his task. Aristotle and Plotinus, Origen too with S. John to aid him, carried further what Plato had begun. But all three lost almost as much as they gained in their elaboration. Plotinus may be roughly counted the inaugurator of the *via negativa* where "not like this" takes the place of "another over against this": the first article of religion in our Prayer Book and Mr Herbert Spencer's "unknowable" are milestones on this way. And indeed it is a good way as far as it will go,

and the invention of it is to be gratefully admired.

Aristotle was a staunch platonist to the last and for all his natural history never cut himself off from his transcendent home. But he is the father of those who have cut off. Those who make history all, who trace progress from a beginning, though it be an everlasting beginning and foresee continuance to even unspeakable wonders in a future, though it be a boundless future ; those who make the act of thought everything, and care not to enquire whence comes the faculty for the act of thought ; those in short who use experience as a boundary, not merely as a means ; all these do rid themselves of the other world but at (the platonist would say) a ruinous price ; and these are the children of a maimed Aristotle. The real Aristotle did indeed provide for modern philosophy, theology, religion. He checked platonic poetry when it might degenerate into fancy. He insisted upon science, the knowledge of things as they go on in a world that is at least so real that it cannot be ignored in practical life : he set out the principles which govern pure thought in a world of experience. But he never taught that this was all. God in his eternal activity of rest, contemplation the ultimate perfect state : there is the something more, and how much more : there is indeed the other world, the being which is beyond becoming,

the one which is absolutely necessary to the existence of the many. But again, he carried the problem nearer to solution, shewed more clearly than had ever been done before that the consonance may be brought nearer and nearer to practical perfection. The great points he established were first that there is no difference in kind between the visible and the other side of life, secondly that in the plain man's conduct of his plain life the establishment of the harmony must be sought. The business of men is, he said, to become as like God as possible, and men can do much toward this becoming.

Aristotle has more use for the name of God than Plato. To Plato the idea of the good is beyond all and means more than God. But is not this just because Aristotle, the naturalist, means nature by God? No; Aristotle the platonist must also go "beyond" nature, and because nature is to him so all-including that even ideas cannot be free of the limiting circumference, he —like us—must speak of God. And he speaks reverently, splendidly, of God. And he too sees that morality, the good, is the essence, and that the transcendence is still natural: there is no gulf between God and man: all nature is divine, is God; but God is the cause of all the appropriate goods of nature, and of man's appropriate goodness, to be like God himself, good morally.

It is still worth while to dwell on this topic,

even tediously. For we invent puzzles in religion which need not trouble us and which arise from thinking about God too naïvely, with a wrong kind of simplicity. Quite right to speak of God after the analogy of ourselves, if we remain aware that we are doing so. But we easily forget what we are doing and treat likeness as identity. We must pray to God, trust God, as a person ; and instead of holding to the Persons in the Godhead and approaching the Father through the Son, we speak loosely of " God " as " a person," and then wonder—to take a commonplace example of our puzzles—how God can deal with the contrary petitions of two good men. Then enters our Aristotle, new or old, so wholesomely, and bids us remember that God is the whole of nature and something more, i.e. the deity beyond. But God is all nature, and the two good men and their two contrary prayers are included in God, for all these four are real things—whether a bad man and a curse would be is a further question with which we need not complicate our present rough simplification. To keep our sense of God, the whole the very God, awake we should often address our prayers to the divine qualities, Love, Holiness etc. ; for in godhead the quality is the being. This advice was given by Dr Moberly in *Atonement and Personality*. And we should often read Isaiah xliv. and xlv. and muse how the prophet's integrity of trust in one God, one all,

all good, fuses its ardour with philosophy. God is the end, and the rule, and the principle of life. When we reach that last term "principle" we perceive the true significance of the imagery of the "other world." For the principle of life is not an influence from a second life, from an outside, from another world, nor even from another person. The principle is within: "inward and downward" is a better picture than "upward." All is spiritual. Only we must remember that what is spiritual is moral, reasonable, natural. The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord.

All this is elementary and some who have read so far will perhaps break off here. "This author tells me no news." I could not complain if one said that. I would only make just this answer; that some who are accustomed to these thoughts are not accustomed to them as the thoughts of the Church, and I hope to shew that they are both biblical and churchmanlike. If God be indeed the greatness we confess, our thoughts of God should grow with the growing revelation God makes of himself in modern science. That is a magnificent drama of evolution which Samuel Alexander unfolds in *Time Space and Deity*. All starts from Time and Space, those twain simplicities neither of which is anything by itself but which (like body and soul) together have the possibility of unlimited developement. The clash

and strain within that bare primordiality gathers into qualities, and at a certain point these knot themselves into a pregnantly relationed group, and from it a new quality is born. This process is again and again repeated. Hence arises life, consciousness, mind, moral sense, spirit: and with spirit we are arrived there where in actual life we men now stand within a kindred universe. But the clash and strain still go on. It is a spiritual strain now. We strain towards deity. And at the fatal moment deity will emerge. Deity will be the new quality, the character of the next stage in the ever evolving life. But " God " will still be " beyond " for when all are deiform that supreme perfection, more than fulness, which the creatures adore and obey, must be distinct from the average, from the community of the many. Thus God is always, at each stage, the whole universe pregnant with (the ever superior quality yet to emerge) deity.

Magnificent? Fantastic? Reasonable or a poet's dream? Professor Alexander must be read by those who presume to decide: his disciplined logic his first-hand learning, nor less his honest disclaimers where his learning (as he thinks) falls short—all this must be appreciated and laboriously followed. That beginning of Space-Time: that incident by the way, Mind; can such dealing satisfy? Need we settle these questions? Consider this rather. When we are

about to worship, collecting our mind in quiet five minutes before service begins, putting ourselves into the presence of God; how do we think of God? We think of our private loves hopes anxieties, our history and future; of friends duties sympathies close round us; of our country and the relationship of nations; of all the circle—time and space—of history humanity and nature; and all is God. But God is more than that all. What more? No one can tell. Surely Professor Alexander helps. We do know even what soars forth beyond our knowing, for all is continuous. It is this All, but this All pregnant with deity before whom we kneel: *Agnoscit homo, ignoscit deus.*

Certainly that kneeling is important. Socrates Plato Aristotle alike recur to the moral impulse and test of divinity. Reading Alexander we are aware of a difference, a further weight and delicacy. The Bible and Prayer Book account for this. Something has emerged in the moral world which Socrates and his generation knew not: their moral world was pregnant with it, but in the moral world now it has come into being. We who dwell in Christendom need not seek another name for this than Christianity; but we may observe that its influence flows beyond those who profess and call themselves Christians. "Love" now is "charity"; moral obligation is affectionate and loyal; sacrifice is not the cult nor in

every-day life a paradox, but evidently reasonable though scantly practised. And into holiness a clash and strain has entered; sin is no longer error, missing of the mark; contrast the advice of Horace—nay, the seriousness of Plato—with the "broken and contrite heart," the "I will arise and go to my father." And this clash and strain is creative; it is the divine pregnancy of the universe; the "deiform seed" of the Cambridge platonists.

None of our fore-runners would help our generation better than these Cambridge platonists. The shortest way to introduce them is to quote a contemporary description of them from Burnet's *History of his own times* (vol. i. p. 187, ed. 1724):

"Some few exceptions there were to the ill state of religion at the end of the 17th century, but so few that if a new set of men had not appeared of another stamp the church had quite lost her esteem over the nation. These were generally of Cambridge, formed under some divines, the chief of whom were Drs. Whichcot Cudworth Wilkins More and Worthington. Whichcot was a man of a rare temper very mild and obliging. He had great credit with some that had been eminent in the late times, but made all the use of it he could to protect good men of all persuasions. He was much for liberty of conscience; and being disgusted with the dry systematical way of those times he studied to raise those who conversed with him to a nobler set of thoughts and to consider religion as a seed of a deiform nature (to use one of

his own phrases). In order to this he set young students much on reading the ancient philosophers chiefly Plato Tully and Plotin, and on considering the Christian religion as a doctrine sent from God both to elevate and sweeten human nature, in which he was a great example as well as a wise and kind instructor. Cudworth carried this on with a great strength of genius and a vast compass of learning. He was a man of great conduct and prudence, upon which his enemies did very falsely accuse him of craft and dissimulation. Wilkins was of Oxford but removed to Cambridge. His first rise was in the Elector Palatine's family when he was in England. Afterwards he married Cromwell's sister, but made no other use of that alliance but to do good offices and to cover the university from the sourness of Owen and Goodwin. At Cambridge he joined with those who studied to propagate better thoughts, to take men off from being in parties or from narrow notions, from superstitious conceits and a fierceness about opinions. He was also a great observer and a promoter of experimental philosophy which was then a new thing and much looked after. He was naturally ambitious but was the wisest clergyman I ever knew. He was a lover of mankind and had a delight in doing good. More was an open hearted and sincere Christian philosopher who studied to establish men in the great principles of religion against atheism that was then beginning to gain ground chiefly by reason of the hypocrisy of some and the fantastical conceits of the more sincere enthusiasts."

Burnet then goes on with Hobbes and how the

platonists made against his influence. Then, "The most eminent of those who were formed under those great men I have mentioned were Tillotson Stillingfleet and Patrick." He writes with special affection of Tillotson; also of Lloyd, Wilkins' Oxford pupil, for his careful learning, though "he had more life in his imagination and a truer judgement than may seem consistent with such a laborious course of study." Tenison too he praises, successor to Lloyd in "the greatest cure in England, St. Martins"; and then ends his admirable half dozen pages with some remarks on the improvement these men brought into the style of preaching: "Clear plain and short. They gave a short paraphrase of the text, unless where great difficulties required a more copious enlargement. But even then they cut off unnecessary shows of learning, and applied themselves to the matter, in which they opened the nature and reason of things so fully and with that simplicity that their hearers felt an instruction of another sort than had commonly been observed before."

That might be questioned by some who know the Cambridge platonists only from Campagnac's Selections. John Smith and Nathanael Culverwell are learned and rhetorical, though applying themselves closely to the matter and opening the nature and reason of things all through. But the Cambridge platonism is not to be estimated

by set discourses. It is a temper even more than a doctrine; or rather, the doctrine is most manifest in the lives of its adherents. Whichcote is the type. He published nothing. He was a great tutor in his college of Emmanuel and formed many minds. He also preached much. His sermons, delivered from mere notes, were taken down by some who heard them and after his death were edited and printed by Dr Jeffery. Dr Jeffery also collected from these, and perhaps other of his papers, a thousand short sentences or aphorisms and made a volume, one of those books which may of right be called golden: an enlarged edition was made fifty years later (1753) by Dr Salter. I will here copy out a few of these aphorisms to justify this digression and to bring, I hope, some clearness thereby to the argument into which this present chapter has run.

"God *fully* answers the relation he stands in to his creatures; *effectually* pursues the ends of his creation; and will *certainly* do what is *perfectly* agreeable to infinite goodness.

"To say that of God which doth *discountenance* the application of his creatures to him in any case of misery and necessity is not 'to glorify God as God.' To glorify God as God is to own him as the general and universal cause, as the first and chiefest good.

"God has fitted everything for its *use*; and secures its *effects*, which are necessary and proper.

" We are no more than *second* causes ; and our sufficiency is only in God, who is the first. A second cause is no cause, divided from the first.

" The *state of the creation* imports the creature's reference to God the creator, and the creator's influence upon man the creature ; the communication of God to men, and the participation men have of God."

Aphorisms 527-531.

" Morals are inforced *by* Scripture ; but were *before* Scripture : they were according to the nature of God." 587.

" Where *reason* speaks it is the voice of our guide ; a natural voice we cannot but hear ; it is according to the very make of our nature. It is also true in religion ; to follow God and to follow right reason is all one ; a man never gives God offence if he doth that which reason requires." 877.

" We ought not to *name* God ; without a *sense* of him upon our minds." 1000.

" There ought to be a sovereignty of mind and understanding, above sense and affection. We ought to use the means ; and enjoy the end. Man is more than bodily temper complexion and constitution. A man existing in time ought to consider himself as lasting to eternity. There ought to be a subordination of the transactions of time to the subsistencies of eternity—These and such like *principles* of reason are to the soul what forms and qualities are to nature." 992.

"Nothing is more *spiritual* than that which is *moral*." 969.

"Expect no greater happiness in eternity than to rejoice in God." 753.

Add this from John Smith's *Excellence of True Religion* (quoted by J. H. Muirhead in his very illuminating essay on *The Cambridge Platonists* in *Mind*, April and July 1927): A true Christian "is more for a solid peace and a settled calm of spirit than for high raptures and feelings of joy or extraordinary manifestations of God in him." These platonists were to the seventeenth century what the "Wisdom-writers"—Job, Ecclesiastes, Sirach, Wisdom of Solomon, Psalm 139 etc.—were to the turmoil of the Maccabees and their kindred. On the one hand *virtus*, on the other *dilectio*: not opposites but mutual in truth.

## VI

### THE GALILEAN GOSPEL

So things moved in Palestine ; certainly a deepening faith and widening. The Jewish Church, which after the exile superseded the monarchy, lacked the epic liberty of the old prophets but accepted the faith which in their own times they had failed to establish. The Bible of the Church was inaugurated by Ezra's public reading of The Law of the LORD by the hand of Moses ; that was the canonisation of the Law. But that Law was both old and new. Mosaic and pre-mosaic elements were selected and arranged, developed and harmonised in accord with the prophetic reformation. And preparation was being made for a larger Bible : collections and editions of the prophets' own utterances ; original publication of apocalypse, which was the outcome and successor of prophecy, with its hope of the Kingdom of God and even of the Messiah in a modern sense, less vague and less grand than the genuine prophetic but more understandable by the vulgar ; with its hope of the resurrection and the fiery temper of the covenanting saints—a kingdom not

of this world; the Wisdom Books also with their large breath from the wide world, their gentile sympathies, their criticism; and all informed and reconciled by the hallowing spirit of devotion whose influence we recognise in the Psalms. The Bible was the edition, finally completed in three volumes, of a nation's holy thoughts, an edition moulded by the rule of worship and enriched by the religious awakenings which were going on in other places and in the hearts of other people besides the chosen race.

For awakenings had been going on all over the world; in Asia; in Greece where Hellas was broadening into a Hellenistic empire, and presently after that was coming (like Jerusalem) under the more material empire of Rome—Hellas becoming Greece as Israel became Jew; and in Rome itself too. Faith was everywhere issuing from childhood into questioning youth, from barbarity to a purer state. Were morals improving too? It would be as rash to deny as perhaps foolish to assert that they were. On the whole what is impressed upon one who tries to take a survey of these five centuries is the flourish of religious thought and the lagging advance of religious life. But still more significant is the consciousness of this. Conscience is awake; a serious religious yearning. Hence lapses of conduct and of reasonable faith, but hopes of forgiveness purification redemption; all manner of

religious ideas which were hardly thought of in the early period of ritual and happy, or more often of ritual and cruel satisfaction. The soul of the wide world was dreaming of things to come.

And the world's dream is met by the dream of the Gospel, a dream by a day-dream which was an actual event in history and yet floats free of space and time, a dream and not a chronicle.

In some French book (which Dr Burkitt told me of) this episode occurs. Scene, one of the seven heavens ; time, after the crucifixion. The Lord Jesus is returning to the Father. Meets him an archangel on some mission of his own. My Lord, he reverently asks, is all done ? Yes all is done. And, my Lord, what ? how ? I lived with men on earth and spoke with fishermen and women, and in some hearts some words abode. Then they killed me ; and here, now I return. And, Lord, is that all ? Yes, there was no other way.

There in briefest is a typical Life of Christ, a modern construction from the ancient Gospels ; truly penetrant but not complete. The Gospels remain inimitable inexhaustible perfect in their imperfection, dream-like, miraculous, myths, Greek pictures of Aramaic life : but real life ; the picture is the picture within, timeless placeless ; " primordial simplicity."

Simple : a word too often profaned. Lucretius'

primordial atoms were but symbols of simplicity. The life words and work of the Gospel were simplicity once and once for all achieved. This is what the Epistle of S. Peter calls "conscience of God," unified satisfied oblate.

Our Lord in the Gospel calls himself Son of Man, which in Aramaic can hardly signify anything but just "a man" (Dalman's argument to the contrary does not get beyond negation; proof positive is lacking); and in Mark no other explanation is anywhere required on the face of things. Yet the recurrence and the contexts point further. In Matthew and Luke Son of Man sometimes becomes just a synonym for "Me." Not so in Mark: Mark's originality is a pregnant witness. When after S. Peter's confession our Lord says, And now the Son of Man goes to Jerusalem to die and on the third day to rise again, he means far more than, I do that. This is Hosea's prophecy for the nation of Israel; our Lord enlarges to mankind—the ransom for many. His dying was indeed to be an act of life, a recovery of life, a creation of new life for all men in him. That is in line with the representative Messiah of the Jewish Church, that idea which S. Paul developes in the Epistle to the Ephesians, the idea of the Christ all in all to be fulfilled, "the Christ to be." But our Lord's own conversation, seeming to fall short of that, goes beyond it. He extends the Incarnation rather than the Christship. Did he

claim to be the Christ (expected by the Jews) ? I think not, and John seems to think not. He made no claim for himself. He did not accept S. Peter's confession in the sense in which it was proferred. He did not go beyond the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He died with the bitter cry still echoing, *Eloi sabachthani*. But the centurion saw that arrival of the Kingdom which was hidden from the dying Saviour. And while he claimed nothing his disciples were constrained to yield him all. And still, in that All, they could not get beyond his generous grace ; My Father, your Father, our Father in heaven ; one with the Father ; peace within ; a kingdom and community within ; will life self essentially in the Father : and he gathers disciples and means to gather all the world thereinto by the oblation of death :—all this is in the Galilean Gospels. This is " the simple gospel preached and believed in Galilee." Paul varied it, omitting and adding. John returned to it, explicating the implicit.

That is the theme of E. A. Abbott's *Fourfold Gospel* (that noble memorial of an honoured master, the crowning achievement of a whole life's piety) : John through Luke restoring Mark. Read Mark : then Luke where he follows Mark. You find Luke altering Mark with bold, or oftener delicate touches, reshaping the Marcan plainness in accordance with his historian's idea. But then

read John; and you find him returning to the Marcan statement, which however he interprets while endorsing it. He recognises Mark's unconscious accuracy. He also sees that the Marcan mere fact is not the ultimate truth. Thus or thus Mark supposed the word to have been uttered, the fact to have happened. Well; sometimes it was not quite really so. The word meant more than Mark apprehended: the act or fact was a symbol: Luke partly perceived this and remodelled the report: John with his "third thought," preserving the first impression, so repeated the narrative as to turn the attention from the possibly doubtful and literal fact to the certainly real and spiritual event. Consider the feeding of the Five Thousand. Was that multitude satisfied by the loaves and fishes, or (as John's narrative implies) by the Bread of Life?

And yet Mark too is coloured by the Christian idea. He does not think about colouring. He goes straight on; is naïve, as we say. But naïvety is not dulness. A perfectly dull or "objective" story cannot be written. The summary in the Litany of that firm line of Gospel story in which all four Evangelists are entirely at one, is but a briefest summary; but how it throbs with the Christian idea. Matthew and Luke have each, very evidently, their historic or theological idea. Mark is spon-

taneous, but he points his tradition with an artist's unpremeditated craftmanship and symbolising strokes : his very brevity and directness, his " straightway " advance, is vigorously symbolic. And thus Mark's history is indeed theology entering the intellectual kingdom of heaven by the gate of the " child," providing unspoiled impressions for the searchers and the doubters of generations to come.

A notable illustration is his narrative of the Passion and Resurrection. " And the women fled from the tomb. For trembling and amazement held them. And they said nothing to any one : for they were afraid." So the Gospel ends in the best text. It is commonly conjectured that this is, however, a best text mutilated ; that Mark wrote more, wrote of appearances of the risen Lord ; but some primitive accident has broken off all textual witness to his last page. Wellhausen says No : it would be *schade*, a pity, to add one word to what we have. And surely he is right. That " for they were afraid " is one of the regular symbols of Mark's artistry. Look through his whole history and count the recurrent inhibitions of fear. Such a finale would be quite in character for Mark. But that is a trifle. The main lies here. This conclusion of Mark preserves unspoiled the wonder, deep vague and aweful of the first Easter morning. Young man or angel ? Tomb empty of

the body? Did disciples see their Lord? Such questions are not proposed. Such questions belong to the natural order, the use and wont of earthly life. Here the eternal breaks through. Presently there was more to record. Disciples were known to have seen the Lord. Critics test the records of these appearances and decide that at the least three or four abide the test. Yet—suppose criticism should some day drive us further. S. Paul cites some appearances in evidence when he explains the doctrine of resurrection to the Corinthians; but who can read that chapter and believe that the appearances were the immutable base of Paul's conviction? By degrees the Gospels are brought into the region of history. In Mark we are still in the region of inspiration. The primal source of the living certainty that our Lord Jesus rose and lives, was for the infant church neither vision for the eye or tradition for the scholar, but an ineffable wonder and mystery which the naïvety of Mark has vitalised perennially.

To that John leads us back; philosophically in the discourse of the Last Supper, evangelically in the Galilean fishing story of his last chapter. Of these more in particular presently. Here however let us notice how John corrects Luke to Mark in the plain fact. Luke stays the whole history after the resurrection at Jerusalem and continues his account of the nascent church from

thence; Mark tells how the young man at the tomb bade the disciples go home to Galilee where they should meet their Lord. And in his last chapter John shews the disciples obedient to the command and their Lord fulfilling his promise.

But how? What manner of meeting was that? The fishing and the wonderful draught of fish and S. Peter in the sea, is taken from the earlier Gospels, but the time is shifted, the incidents and details are varied. The discourse at the Last Supper had led to the difficult but sure and satisfying truth that henceforth the Master would be in closer union than ever before with his disciples, but spiritually not sensibly. This miraculous draught, this meal upon the shore, that walking and talking as though in the habit of ordinary life was never meant by the evangelist to be taken by his readers as literal and factual. Of all the "signs" in his Gospel this is the most plainly symbolic. The meeting in Galilee as John understood it, was to be no repetition of former meetings, no eye to eye, no words of mouth and ear, but heart in heart "they in me and I in them, and all one in the Father." To him the resurrection is a rising rather than a rising again; it is the inauguration of the new life, in Christ, walking by the Spirit, that communion of saints in their ever living Redeemer which is and was and ever shall be life eternal.

And the whole context of the earlier Gospels justified John in thus interpreting the Galilean promise. To know God as Father, and the Son whom he sent for that end, is life eternal; so John reports (or comments on) the word of our Lord. But this is the pervasive teaching of the other three Gospels. In those the Lord no doubt uses freely (not "infinitely" nor yet too "carefully") the imagery of his place and time when he speaks about immortality and life to come and judgement. He does this however more in parable than homily, and as he does it he corrects the popular religion; as in the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, as in the picture of judgement with the Son of Man as judge. Nor are the Kingdom or the New Birth in his mind and from his lips equivalent to a place time or event beyond the grave. Life as a whole and known in present experience and duty is life for which he cares.

And when he lays imagery quite aside and defines precisely his very mind, he appeals to the doctrine of the Jewish Church, appealing to Moses "at the Bush." For the Lord Jesus, as for every ingenuous Judean "The God of the living" and all living unto Him, is the dogma of the resurrection.

From the store of the good householder he brings forth language old and new, finding no fault with those for whom the old is good; but in his own

last prayer upon the Cross he was content (like the old-fashioned and meditatively modern Ecclesiastes) with Genesis and Psalm, only adding "Father" to "Into thy hands—my Spirit."

## VII

### S. PAUL

Did S. Paul change the simple Gospel believed and taught in Galilee into "another"? Some said so while he lived; some say so now. And when we say the Lord's Prayer or read the Prodigal Son and from these turn to Paul's doctrine of atonement in Romans; or when we see and hear the Lord Jesus among his disciples in Galilee and turn thence to Paul's proclamation of the Person of Christ in Colossians, we cannot but feel some shade of misgiving. If we hear the epigram: Paul turned the Kingdom of heaven into a mystery-religion of a Saviour-god, and steep ourselves in modern literature about these Greek and Asianic mysteries, the misgiving deepens. We are apt to allow that Paul was a bold moderniser and that catholic sacramental Christianity comes from him and not from his Lord and ours.

That is the contagious magic of contemporary literature. But a crude familiarity with the original documents—Gospels Acts Epistles—is very corrective, and justly so in part.

For first, there is a somewhat in Paul which

entices to the schematising of him. The modern books about Paul inevitably decline upon Paulinism. But that is an illusion. His thinking and his writing are as free various and nervous as his character and action.

Secondly; take one notable point in the scheme of Paulinism, his daring and elaborate doctrine of the Person of Christ as sketched in Colossians. Well: it is a sketch dashed off at heat in a letter. It is not systematic, and Jewish wisdom literature accounts for nearly all the language and idea. It is not an analysis of Jesus of Nazareth as very man and very God, but his expressed conviction that in Jesus of Nazareth whose Spirit is still and for ever more the life of the faithful, all the poetry and piety of Psalms and Proverbs in which the invisible infinite God is pictured in creation and communion with men, has been most perfectly realised. And this conviction is a protest against the vaguer speculations of extra-Judaic philosophy.

But thirdly: though he protests he sympathises. All the yearnings hopes fears and pious prayer and ritual of the Gentile world touch him to the heart. *Homo sum: nihil alienum* . . . might have been written by Paul. He is humanist through and through, and this not only quickens his sympathy but colours his language. In Colossians indeed he quotes a formula from the

mystagogues in repudiation, but again and again he adopts their terms perhaps to conciliate his destined converts, often because he is himself interested and finds these terms convenient to his meaning, as elsewhere he finds terms of Jewish ritual or rabbinic argument.

However the plain and notable characteristic is his care not for ritual language and ways of worship ancient or modern Jewish or foreign, but for righteousness. He had found the power for righteousness in devotion to Jesus as Christ. All men must prove that power: they must have the chance. It was a righteous act to admit the Gentiles without the Law, and would make for righteousness in a wide field. That was what the old-fashioned converts from the Jewish Church doubted. Paul's innovation in ethics gave offence: we hear of no objection to his new theology.

For to the converts from the Jewish Church his theology was not new. Nothing in his epistles ever threatens infringement of strict monotheism. And for his Christ; what did he indeed assert? If not the face and voice, the heroic story of the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth was known to him. Then (after what inner conflicts we know not) the vision blinded him on the road to Damascus and restored him to a new sight and new life; crucified with Christ yet alive; no self no private life any more, but the new life which was Christ in him; an inner spiritual life of

passionate trust in the Lord who died for him and who had set him free.

Set him free from sin self remorse divided will. What we call atonement in a scheme of paulinism, he called reconciliation. If we restore what may have been the original intention of those who translated the greek word by atonement, it is an excellent translation. We see its primitive meaning by dividing and hyphening, " at-one-ment." There is no idea in the word itself of propitiation. It signifies the freedom of righteousness, the extinction of complicated contrarieties in a man towards God. It expresses the detachment, simplicity, peace and effectiveness for service of the converted soul. And that immeasurable joy impelled Paul's missionary ardour. Here was " the life indeed," with its riches generosity and spiritual anticipation of " the life to come." And this must be offered to all. That inner harmony, transforming all changes and chances into the life which is life indeed for him, must be imparted to all mankind.

Hence the charm of Paul's career: the idyll of empire, the new Rome, the Odyssey of Acts; his gallant character, princely, complex, simplified—Not I but Christ liveth in me. The story is ardently personal throughout. Sometimes a show is made of argument; scarce meant to be taken as logic, now and again ironical. The victory is always an *O altitudo*, triumphant conviction

of one whose private person has been lost and found in the overmastering influence of his benefactor—the ignored and denied Saviour who died for him. No condemnation now for those in Christ Jesus! I am persuaded that no power of life or death of heaven or earth can separate from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul's gospel grows from the Judaic along the Judaic line. It does differ from the Galilean in not unimportant points. His doctrine of the person of Christ is almost wholly a developement of the Judaic Messiah expressed in terms of the Hebrew Wisdom literature with perhaps additions (chiefly verbal) from the Greco-Asiatic cults. But in the really essential matter he is at one with the Galilean Master and S. John. To be "in Christ" now and for ever, that is what he cares about; to live the life which is larger than his own, to live by Spirit not by unredeemed nature, apostolically not on the level of the average. Death and a future state beyond the grave are not the questions for him in the sense in which these questions had been commonly posed. For him death flesh and sin are almost symbolic formulas for a slavery from which mankind is now redeemed and may be freed in fact. To meet the Lord and evermore to be with him is Paul's "future": peace freedom goodness love, in the Lord Christ, is the present

pledge of that future: practical morality and ideal faith are the interrelated means of realising that pledge—so generously and divinely given in a world of grace not law.

And the crude question of "personal immortality," of the "future state" of thee and me, could never deeply engage his mind. For to Paul, as to every Jew, religion was a community of souls. He knows no private gift of the Spirit. His doctrine of love is his doctrine of the Church now, of "God all in all" at last.

In later years a vista opened to him instead of the swift Maranatha of the missionary period. It was a vista of history for the Church on earth. The key to what had been a problem of unity was found in "The Body of the Christ." That Body is the blessed company of all faithful people. The whole Christ is the ancient Jewish inclusive Christ, "all in all being fulfilled." And this actual Body is wholly spiritual, and thereby we must interpret Paul's idea of the spiritual body in the epistles to the Corinthians. He wrote indeed then and there as though each several person's own particular body might be the question. His maturer utterance corrects that imagination, which his own fancy never rested in: for him there was one Lord, one Spirit, one spiritual body all the time. But also all the time a really spiritual body, only in the earlier stage it is vaguely defined. To the Corinthians

this is his argument:—Christ's (not "Jesus"; the significance springs from the representative or inclusive Christ of Judaic tradition) Christ's resurrection on the third day, according to the Scriptures, is of one piece or power with that resurrection of all saints which good Pharisaic churchmen expect. In the Christian Church (where Gentiles too have learned that expectant faith) some are denying this resurrection of the Christ. But that is mere denial of the whole Christian fulfilment of Jewish theology. This fact, initial and impulsive, is vital. And it is fact: our Christ, the Lord Jesus, the crucified Redeemer, has been seen: there is plain evidence. But how seen? Paul commits himself to no answer there. He too had seen; as the martyr Stephen had seen. Stephen described vividly enough what he saw. The evangelists Matthew and Luke add appendices to their gospels of appearances, described in frank imagery, yet with remarkable lapses from the use and wont of ordinary intercourse. Paul translates not his vision: to him the risen Christ is bodied spiritually. And that spiritual body:—it belongs to all men. To put on the spiritual body is the purpose of this earthly life. Into this earthly life men are sown like seeds with an earthy body of flesh and blood; earthy, yet even so a vehicle of something more. That earthy body dies: it inherits not incorruption. But meanwhile another body purely

spiritual has been forming; surrounding, permeating the person; and connecting each person with all those neighbours who are in moral relation with him; thus the spiritual body of each gains clear outline only when it becomes part of the one spiritual body which is the Christ with all his saints:—this completion however of the idea is not elaborated in 1 Corinthians, it waits the later epistles.

The spiritual body is "put on." It comes "from heaven"; is the "second man," the destined reality of what we term "the person" (the bold original apostolic text must of course be followed, not the later commonplace "the Lord from heaven"). The "old man" is thus put off, the new put on. Three or four times in the later epistles this metaphor is repeated and Paul's thought, though never formulated, is displayed. The covering, tabernacle, body, is always described in terms of character (which is what Paul means by Spirit, influential character). It is love joy peace. Therein consists the spiritual body, the immortal the incorruptible. Thus men must "change" for their resurrection. While the Advent was expected immediately Paul promises that the Advent itself, not death, shall foreshorten this change. The normal mode—and later the normal mode alone would need consideration—is to live now and here "in the Christ." Christ's indissoluble life is far more

than proof of the Pharisee's resurrection faith. It is " power." It is " the Spirit in our mind " continually renewing our youth immortally and divinely.

In 1 Cor. xv. all this is brought into line, as far as may be, with traditional apocalyptic scenery of time and place. But Paul's allusions make us understand the scenery to be but scenery. The trumpet shall indeed blow: but what does that truly mean? The Lord shall come; judgement shall be given; but after judgement still " the end " supervenes. And Son, Kingdom, all these reverent and reverend essays of human language shall be superseded; God shall be all in all. Thus the fragmentary picture, the abrupt argument, pass into the Pauline *O altitudo*.

That predominance of sincere rhetoric, as from one conscious of revelation, is perhaps Paul's weakness but it is certainly his strength. Such a dialectician will indeed be picturesque in delineating spirit. But if that meant that he conceived spirit as rarefied matter or any such crudity there could be no consistency in all his many recurrences to the theme. Allow him to mean by Spirit just spirit pure, utterly immaterial, entirely moral; then all becomes consistent though astonishing; as apostolic doctrine, in its original text, directly envisaged, generally is astonishing.

Only this remains to be said. S. Paul would

himself hardly like the phrase "utterly immaterial." He has the ingenuously sacramental mind. Earth, time, place, forces of nature, are realities to him. "Flesh," the morally contrarious, is his antithesis to the spiritual and real. Not only are things eternal seen through things temporal. For him, as for natural science to-day, all is a "continuum" as far as conceivable experience goes. And beyond conceivable experience he does not go. "Eye hath not seen—it hath not entered into heart of man." Yes, but the heart of God is more than imagery. The heart of God is the heart of man. Christ is Jesus. Life which is life indeed is life in which loves duties powers persons interplay. For S. Paul the spiritual body means that Jesus comes as Christ, not "after the flesh" yet perhaps not "immaterially" either; that each, not just sublimely all, is caught up to be with him. The "scenery" is some thing, the symbol partakes of the reality it symbolises. Commonplaces these; but commonplaces more thoroughly applicable to Paul than to John. "We go to God": that was not enough for Paul, as it was not enough for Paul's ancestor the Maccabean Pharisee. We sleep, we wake, he thought; we wake from concrete personal faith to concrete personal fulfilment of life.

## VIII

### THE FIERY TRIAL : I PETER HEBREWS AND APOCALYPSE

And now we would hasten to S. John, for in the Gospel "according to John" the heart of our theme is reached; the apostolic pilgrimage finds resting point, whence to start afresh in wider field and new day; fresh doubts and questionings are set, but the right way to question and the right expectancy of answer are assured.

Yet a few pages of transition must be written. Between the apocalyptic or progressive promise of S. Paul and the "here and now" of John a period of trial intervenes, like the days of trial or "temptation" which Jewish tradition foretold as preluding the advent of the Messianic kingdom—"Thy kingdom come. . . . Lead us not into temptation."

The documents are the (first) Epistle of S. Peter, the Epistle to the Hebrews, "The Apocalypse of John the Divine" whether that be the apostle the "elder" or whosoever. These brief chapters are no critical introduction to the literature of the New Testament. We will take all the

questions of date and authorship, so elaborately scholarly and admirably discussed by a century of competent writers, as already studied and select from the three originals what serves our purpose.

It is a period of fiery trial. In 1 Peter a letter from Rome to the Christians in Asia gives warning. In Hebrews the trial is imminent. In the Apocalypse the storm has burst forth in blood and fire.

Such trial breeds richer faith in life. So it was with the Maccabean saints. So is it here. But this enrichment comes now with no novel developement of a doctrine of resurrection, but with a tender loyal tremendous affirmation of the certainty that Jesus lives. We are pilgrims with God in this world ; we go home to God when we die ; and that is enough : such was the faith of the patriarchs. The Son of God goes forth to war ; who follows in his train ? such was the satisfaction of the persecuted Christians.

The Name of Jesus rings through the three books. So in subsequent history it has always been. Times of suffering bring the cult of the Name—" How sweet the Name of Jesus ! " To these three writers Jesus comes in the trial of the times. One of them is called Peter. Silvanus writes his letter for him in fair scholar's Greek. His message is tinged with Galilean affection and expectation of speedy reunion with the

Great Shepherd. Some had seen him and remembered. Those to whom the letter goes had not. But persecution brings equality. In a time of extremity, "when things are at the worst," he comes. And he comes as no Galilean stranger to Asiatic Greeks. Let them be loyal and they shall know his very features and be glad.

This is not the Christ of S. Paul "no longer after the flesh." This is a looking back on Gospel days. Like Paul's the vision is inward spiritual, but is of Jesus the very human master. And it is most real. "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak" the Lord had said (regarding flesh in no Pauline sense), and his disciples with the fiery trial approaching understood the consolation.

"The days of his flesh." That thought and yearning recollection pervades the Petrine epistle. In Hebrews the phrase itself is found, the satisfying phrase. This was the time perhaps when the Gospels, our written Gospels, began to appear; beautiful records of an obscure life and a dreadful death, by every vulgar estimate a mean death. This is the scandal of the cross, the realism of the Gospel; and great affection is needed to face realism.

Such affection the epistle to the Hebrews nourishes with its pathetic allusions to those "days of his flesh." And it presents more than that. It discovers a forgotten principle: that by divine measurement glory is in humiliation.

Glory in humiliation: that theme is repeated magnified and decorated in the epistle with a noble rhetoric, a picturesquely platonic sacramental earnestness. And inasmuch as this principle is the secret of Christian joy and of the endurance of martyrs, but is very difficult, the writer offers to his wavering friends a profound doctrine of the Person of their Lord and the efficacy of his aid. Think of him as priest, his death as sacrificial cleansing and renewing of men's marred and outworn life, he says; so shall you understand what he has done for you; what he will do for you "to-day"; why you must and can stand firm for him in loyalty.

Jesus lives to-day, and Jesus comes to-day, summoning you as Captain. All the Saints of all the ages past are watching your obedience to the summons. The fulfilment of our indissoluble life rests, to-day, with you.

And do mortals live? Is their life for to-day, or beyond the grave, or for ever? With what a holy scorn this author would repel the doubt. But how differently, how more magnanimously he would put the question. Jesus died thus consummating life. He calls you to do so now, with him. Death is no conclusion, no penalty for sin, but the crown, purpose, completion of the "days of flesh." Our Master lives. What more need we ask or care about?

We read, and doubt not, but are abashed.

Such stuff are martyrs made of. In such faith the Lord Jesus rose on the third day.

The Apocalypse promises to shew things that are quickly to come to pass. But the seer is at once carried in Spirit into the Day of the Lord, and everything is represented as going on now. We see eternity through the portal of time. Time and place dissolve into timeless and spaceless heaven. Only at the conclusion of the vision does the symbol return to its finitude in the prayer, Even so, Come Lord Jesus.

All is symbol, vast and vague though vivid:

> Quaerit enim rationem animus, cum summa loci sit infinita foris haec extra moenia mundi,
> quid sit ibi porro quo prospicere usque velit mens atque animi iactus liber quo pervolet ipse.*

It is large like the ancient Hebrew prophecy. What so ever other influences come in, still that ancient prophecy is the source. If we prefer to call the form apocalypse, it is apocalypse in its fresh classical vigour, Ezekiel rather than Daniel. And like the ancient prophets the seer deals with nations and principles rather than with persons and historical events. We are not shewn what

* For since the sum of space is unlimited outside beyond these walls of the world, the mind seeks to apprehend what there is yonder there, to which the spirit ever yearns to look forward, and to which the mind's immission reaches in free and unembarrassed flight.

Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, II. 1044 ff., Munro's Translation.

will happen to man in a judgement with rewards and punishments beyond the grave, nor how the empires and dynasts will rise and fall in the future generations of earth. A Roman magistrate might read a threat or an exultation over the ruin of Rome. The Christian multitude then and the critical student now might take a like view. But that interpretation remains ambiguous and obscure. The certain meaning of the vision is that beyond, or deep within, the change and chance, the tyranny and suffering of human life in its passage is the unchanging goodness of God. And this goodness is almighty in the Christian not the pagan sense for the might is in the mercy : the divine love has wrought the miracle of redemption : there is the throne of God and of the Lamb : in the light of the heavenly city the " nations " (not " of them that are saved ") walk.

The Apocalypse is a picture with vast scenery and immense hope. The fierce destructive vaticinations are of evil principles and forces and do not foretell the fates of individuals. Nor may we formulate a scheme of future happinesses for individuals out of its group and multitude of saints. But life, eternal life—the whole drama proclaims it. The new abundant life is taken for granted. What is peculiar to the vision is the sense of greater reality about this life in its heavenly prototype than is possibly to be perceived through the mist of temporal struggle.

And there is a tenderness and comfort in this revealed view such as no other literature has equalled.

But that comfort occurs in episodes. The strong colour of the book is a more widely extending intenser joy. The victory of the Lamb of God not the private satisfaction of his followers is the fulness of this joy. The Johannine Gospel and the Baptist and his princely answer come to mind as we lose ourselves in the sublimity of this dream for heroes and children: This my joy therefore is fulfilled; he must increase, I must decrease.

The book had strange fortunes in the first centuries of the making of the Christian Bible. Admired and disliked, enjoyed as poetry abused as prose; at last received generally, and now supplying the most solemn splendid patient hopeful conclusion to the New Testament, the document of the inimitable Christian confidence in life: Even so, Come Lord Jesus.

## IX

### THE GOSPEL OF THE WORD : A GOSPEL OF YOUTH FOR YOUTH

In the preface to *Dante and his circle* Rossetti wrote thus : " The Vita Nuova is a book which only youth could have produced and which must chiefly remain sacred to the young ; to each of whom the figure of Beatrice, less life-like than love-like, will seem the friend of his own heart." The sentence often makes me think of the Gospel according to S. John. That is a gospel of youth, not of old age. Written at the end of the apostolic century it does not close the byegone romance but, opening a new era, recovers it. The aged bishop of Ephesus, John the elder, presbyter, priest (as he styles himself in his epistles), may be called the author in the free nomenclature of the early church. But though he taught he did not compose this gospel. Some young man did that : one whose modern mind was astir with the questions, doubts and disputations of his day, bringing older philosophy than the Christian to help towards fresh interpretation of the ecclesiastical tradition, aglow with hope for deeper, simpler truth about the Person of the holy Redeemer, the

world-wide need for and sympathy with his teaching, the sacramental mystery that permeated all life and death and life through death which was the eternal meaning of the cross, the quiet natural reasonableness of all this, the need to recognise this reasonableness, to claim boldly freedom from the rhetoric of Jewish tradition—" A Greek to the Temple " he was, but a loving trusting soul, not confident in self.

We can but dream and guess about his relation to the aged master. But there seems no reason to deal pompously with the simple sweet tradition. Like all tradition it is dim—stories told, not austere history. Through the evening haze we get glimpses of a quiet episcopate at Ephesus: an old apostle (who prefers to call himself just " priest ") ; one who remembered teaching and conversation of the Lord that had made little impression on his other companions, older men and accustomed to the Jewish ways of thought—new wine was fermenting even then but for them the old was good. But he had marked and remembered, and his meditations had been clarified by long communion in the spiritual presence of his Lord, gone but not absent, more really present than in the days of his flesh. Thus he had told the story of the divine ministry death and victory, simply and profoundly to his flock at Ephesus, a gospel in rough, and a gospel different in character though indeed the same in sub-

stance as the gospel of the practical effective western church. So simply did he tell it that the listeners hardly recognised the unusual tone of this peculiar teaching. But one of them, young intimate thoughtful, did recognise this, and saw beyond, and when the apostolic master died he composed out of the oral teaching a finished gospel, the book we still read. He put his master into it, honouring him with greater honour than any master has received from a pupil, for he described him as The Disciple whom Jesus loved. He perpetuated his honour too by writing the book in the same simple language as his master used in talk : he had learned it as his secretary, writing out his pastoral letters for him : a childlike late-learned Greek, capable however of expressing philosophy. But no doubt he treated the material freely. He used the earlier written gospels, our Matthew, Mark, Luke. He used the wider fluid tradition current still in memory, hearsay, conversation. He selected, recombined, shifted the accent so as to explain the sequence of events, the interplay of character. He applied the bygone to the interests of his own day. He looked onward to future generations, and he looked forth to the alien nations of the wide world, and he looked beneath the surface of men's minds and saw the affinities of many imperfect faiths with the one truth which even the disciples of the Lord Jesus had as yet but understood in part.

We might almost say he was the first of those who have tried to write a "Life of Christ," not adding another to the primitive immediate gospels, but using these, interpreting, reading between the lines, expressing like an artist "the picture within" to which they strove to reach with care and conscience. But if we say that, we must say something more. Inspiration cannot be defined. Yet inspiration is a fact, and when the line was drawn between the books of the New Testament and all other books of like subject, purpose, character, that line was justly drawn. A line of the same kind may be drawn between two kinds or two intensities of Christian life. Our Lord's "I must," S. Paul's "The love of Christ constrains me" or his "I am crucified with Christ, and yet I live: and yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," or the apostles before the Sanhedrin: "We cannot but speak of those things which we have heard and seen"—these sentences indicate the distinction. There is a death of self, a vital compulsion of the Holy Spirit, which goes beyond prudence choice taste judgement scholarship, which compels rare souls in every age but was characteristic of the earliest age of the faith; and when that rules, inspiration is there. And when a history or a philosophy has been written in that compelling spirit the writer has set down that which was shewn to him, not merely what he got by searching. It is the

difference between inspiration and Humane Letters, *litterae humaniores*. And in that compelling spirit the Gospel according to S. John was composed. It may be a gospel of thought rather than of fact. It may modify one kind of truth in order to reach another—and surely a deeper kind. As the church Father said, "This is a spiritual gospel." As some one said the other day, "Here words have the power of substantiating deeds."

It may be so. It may seem so in greater or less degree to various readers. But, in whatever degree, the Evangelist wrote as he was bid to write. No earlier chronicle constrained him, but the vision in his mind: his inward vision of history and its meaning, a vision as certainly presented to him as was the vision of apocalypse presented to John who saw it in the island of Patmos.

"A book which only youth could have produced." Of course that cannot be certainly asserted of this gospel. But the more I read it, the more it seems to me to be so. The last chapter, the fishermen disciples on their lake again, meeting the risen Lord in the fresh dawn of the new day and new hope; surely that is no appended afterthought, but a symbol of the whole story; the modern hope of the new generation just grown up out of the storm and stress of

the formative period, a hope unified and simplified at last and not yet disillusioned; a gospel of reason and of life for the whole world; The Gospel of the Word or The new generation—that might be the title of the volume.

As such it offers itself to the new generation of these days. This new generation is drawn to Jesus. It is drawn in many ways. Some through the church, returning with increased devotion to ancient orthodoxies, to catholic faith and practice. Some by what looks like quite another path, with no taste at all for creeds and institutions. Some just to Jesus as example, not as divine: yet these even more than others perhaps to Jesus as Lord and Master commanding the heroic life. Nearly all with a wide outlook, a yearning for the common wealth, the universal service, the brotherhood of men. But all to Jesus; to the Gospel; and to the Gospel as all men, as plain men, can accept it. Not to the Old Testament (which is even too apt to be disregarded); not to the mystery and majesty of God, but only to the Father as Jesus showed God to men. And all to Jesus with a kind of tenderness and delicacy of loyalty, to Jesus of Nazareth, not to the aweful Byzantine Christ, but to "Ecce Homo" and the crown of thorns, as he stands in the Gospel according to S. John. The name itself attracts: "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds." This has always happened after a time of trouble—and

1914–19 was a time of trouble. The cult of the Sacred Name, the homely name, has won the heart of the people at such times. Think of all the Jesus chapels dedicated in England after the Wars of the Roses. And in this gospel a very homely affection is the leading note, the clue to its theology.

It tells the story of a little company of friends, joined some of them by ties of blood relationship. First we see them in their Galilean country home. Up to the Feeding of the Five Thousand, Galilee is the centre and the events are happy and should be taken simply. The glory which was manifested first at Cana was most obviously the glory of loving-kindness, a kindly help in difficulty at a village festival, a family gathering. Gradually these friends are drawn closer. Affection deepens into love. Daily following of the Master reveals his wonder: loyalty, trust, expectation grow passionate, yet quietly passionate. All is quiet in this gospel, quiet and natural, no rhetoric, no sudden appeals; you pass (as it were) from earth to heaven without discerning the transition: indeed there is no transition, for the peculiar secret disclosed therein is just this, that heaven is earth, a depth not a beyond, "the picture within."

Then clouds gather. The centre shifts. Jerusalem, the cruel city of bigots, becomes an arena of strife and at last an altar of sacrifice. The

serenity is disturbed. There is jangling controversy. The outlook becomes more and more threatening. Hope fails. Defeat, death, parting are certain and draw nearer and nearer. But step for step with the grim movement of events the little band draw closer together, closer to the Master, consolidating transubstantiating homely affection into a diviner love. "Let us also go that we may die with him" said S. Thomas. "The glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one," said the Lord in the prayer which follows the Last Supper. And we scarcely notice the astonishing intensity of the promise because it is the inevitable conclusion of the homely affection which interpenetrates all that has led up to it.

But presently we do notice and surely we are amazed. Our Lord contemplates a union of himself with all who trust him, a union within the godhead as complete as his own unity with the Father: the very same glory which the Father hath given me I have given them, he says. It is really the same and he really means "all," all in all time to come who trust him: "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that trust in me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us." And then comes

a glance along a vista of even wider hope, " that the world may believe that thou didst send me," even that hostile world of which it is written in the epistle, " we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." That is a hope which is already fulfilled in part. The younger generation of to-day would not subscribe to such a judgement. Nor would S. John desire it. Through his little band of brothers Jesus their Lord has already done something for the wide outer world. Boundaries are dissolving. His love, his goodness, are not confined within the limits of a church or a faith.

But in this gospel neither of those terms, church and faith, are found. The word " faith " is eschewed, perhaps it had been already vulgarised. But the corresponding verb is frequent. Yet you noticed perhaps that I took a liberty with its translation and put " trust " instead of " believe." In one place in this gospel you must do that to make sense. It is possible to do so wherever the verb occurs. It fits the direct simplicity of its thought to do so always : there is nothing technical or bookish in its style ; no more than there is rhetoric ; Paul's rhetoric is moving, splendid, right ; but it is far from the way of John. Just trusting, trusting with the trust of love, is the Lord's demand. He seems in this gospel to come saying this : " Yes, I am the very Son of God the Father : and I have come to you with

this message from my Father: Trust me and come with me to him and you shall be sons of the Father just as I am."

That paraphrase is based on no single passage but on the whole contexture of the gospel. If objected to as bold, the answer is not only that it is consonant, though not so obviously consonant, with much in the three earlier gospels and S. Paul, but rather that this gospel was a bold one. For half a century after its appearance the great church neglected or even opposed it. It omitted and it added. It put old truth in a startling modern way. And it needs to be read boldly, that is in its own plain natural sense, to-day. Not its agreements but its differences from the earlier parts of the New Testament are its value. Once again a modern period is opening, and once again this gospel offers itself as guide. If we accept it with frank docility it will not contradict the ancient truth once for all delivered, but will explicate and vivify. According to its own promise the Holy Spirit will be found still leading towards all the truth, and still that truth shall make us free.

Jesus is God: the deity of Jesus Christ. Is not that a question which touches the new generation in a new way? B. K. Cunningham, Principal of Westcott House, has good right to speak for catholic tradition and for the stirring heart of

youth as well, and he has said this : " Men to-day are not particularly interested in proofs of the deity of Christ, but they are profoundly concerned to believe in the Christlikeness of God." We approach this mystery with (it may be hoped) a really more genuine reverence than we used : not coolly from apart as a problem to be solved, but intimately as a gracious annunciation of God's communion with man, the Father with his children. There is an ancient collect : " O God, who didst wonderfully constitute our nature and hast more wonderfully restored it, grant that by this holy mystery we may be partakers in his deity who deigned to become partaker in our manhood, thy Son Jesus Christ." That ancient bold theology is especially the theology of S. John. When critical study of the gospels began, John was set aside by the historians because John's portrait of the divine transcendent Christ was so different from the Galilean Jesus : in those earlier gospels we might read of the very human Master, in this later gospel Deity moved among and above men only in part disguised as one of them : it was a gospel of tremendous claims to godhead : I and the Father are One, its Christ iterates. Now we read again more carefully, and find every one of those tremendous claims running into an even more surprising promise : Yes, and if you will but trust me, you also shall be one with the Father. " Very God of very God, consubstantial—" :

the original of that paraphrase is not "I am God, ye are but men, between God and man there is essential difference"; but "No man cometh unto the Father but by me."

And here too is a claim, perhaps of peculiar difficulty for people of to-day. The exclusive claim of Christianity to be the only true religion, unique and final. Ah no. Do not formulate it thus. Say Christ, not Christianity; and John would rather we said The Eternal Word than even Christ. There is a curious relegation in this gospel of the title Christ, as though too narrowly national for the world-wide hope now breaking forth. Take one instance as a hint for reflection. In the three early gospels the Feeding of the Five Thousand, that Messianic feast, leads on to the confession of S. Peter, Thou art the Christ. Then follows the prediction of the Passion, and the journey to Jerusalem, and the change in the drama from Galilean happiness to tragedy. In S. John this sequence corresponds, but (in the genuine ancient text which our Revised Version follows) there is no "Thou art the Christ." Instead we hear S. Peter uttering confession in another form. "Will ye also go away? . . . Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." And here and there the Evangelist seems to be feeling for some other larger term, and in the Prologue (added doubtless

to his finished work, as a significant preface) he finds and records it : " In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us. And we beheld his glory, glory as of an only son of a father, full of grace and truth."

" Less life-like than love-like." Yes, in a certain way the phrase applies. There is a grandeur of love, as of a vast idea, which transforms the use and wont of common life for the Master and his disciples in this gospel. There is an awe at the Last Supper when he lays aside the garments of our transitory life and robes himself again in the eternities of the Word that was and is and shall be everywhere and everywhen. " I am the way, the truth, the life : no man cometh unto the Father except by me." But what a breadth, what a universal sympathy. Whenever the real way appears in past or future history, that way is Jesus the Word. Wherever true truth rules, that truth is Jesus the Word. That is the Only, the Unique, because it is the universal. " We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." S. John was neither vague nor sentimental. He recognised the facts, the moral facts, which limited and even contradicted the universal creed. He recognised the divine commission to the fellowship of the faithful—in his day still so very few—to resolve the boundaries and overcome the contradictions, but he would not allow names and abstractions—church,

christianity, or more sacred forms than these if such there be—to limit the all-pervading virtue of the idea of Jesus the Word.

And yet this Word was and is Jesus. The idea cancels not the compassionate manhood, though it lifts it from the commonplace. Think of the Agony and Bloody Sweat, the Cross and Passion, the precious Death. Then think of the miseries of this sinful world, which are so many and so bitter that they seem to the multitude the only reality, and forbid them often to believe in any kindness providence or reasonable design. I do not enlarge upon this terrible theme. But moderate experience, reflection, sympathy, will open the eyes of the happiest to the riddle of fate, the injustice and aweful penalty of failure, the invincible power of malignity. Through all this, how can men find communion with God, peace, hope? Perhaps there never will be a complete answer to such question. As yet at any rate the clouds lie thick around the noblest hearts. But read the gospel narrative of the Redeemer's Passion. Here the clouds do lift. Here such light shines as at least shews a way of knowledge. Plainly it shews a way of trust, heroic yet simple, within the reach of every man to imitate. That is the Christian profession: "To follow the example of our Saviour Christ, and to be made like unto him, that as he died and rose again for us so should we who are baptized . . ." "No

man cometh unto the Father but by me." Is that not a practical truth, though it baffles logical explication ?

A guest from the West of America told us in our college parlour at Cambridge that an endowment had been made in his country for a religious drama. The intention was to represent all the great religions in turn : but that had never been carried out. They began with a Passion Play like Ober Ammergau, but their acting left off where the main interest of Ober Ammergau begins : they acted all the previous scenes but left the crucifixion itself unshewn. We can respect their scruple and it did not spoil their play. So powerful, so true to life it proved that they have never cared to vary the representation. No other religion gave anything like this. Through Jesus they glorified God, through him they came to the Father.

True to life. " Less life-like than love-like." This gospel is commonly described as less life-like and natural than the earlier three. Take it and read it. Read it aloud. You will certainly not endorse that judgement absolutely. Read the narrative of the raising of Lazarus. You will never find anything more vivid. If you have studied the historical difficulties which beset this narrative, you will be fain to sweep them all away, saying to yourself, This writer writes in such a

way that I must believe every word he says. That excitement passes presently. You do review the difficulties again and compare them with like difficulties in other passages. And it may be you conclude that this Evangelist has been very free with facts: he by no means photographs events just as they happened. Indeed, if you accept the record of the earlier Evangelists, you are sometimes compelled to allow this: the differences are irreconcilable, as for instance about the cleansing of the temple; did that take place at the beginning or end of the ministry?

But then again you read. You read the whole story straight through. It proves more than just consistent with itself. You find that it has brought you more intimately into the circle of the Lord Jesus and his familiar disciples. The affection which binds them together is more wonderful than anything in the earlier gospels. You know these persons better than you ever did there. Yet this knowing has a curious trait in it. You do not know each separately so much as all together, interpenetrating one another, souls rather than figures, more love-like than common-life-like. "Wonderful" is an often abused word but it is the right word here; unless we prefer to say "sacramental." But what would that mean?

John does not photograph events. No one who tells a story quite does that. Yet Mark

sometimes does nearly that. He tells things naïvely, as we say ; and much of his peculiar charm and value springs from that. A photograph is like a mirror. It preserves the reflexion of the surface. A painter selects, arranges, accents, colours (not with the colours of nature). He is bold and free with facts. He seeks till he sees : then he thinks and labours (with painful honesty, the scholar's conscience) till he at last expresses the picture within. That is what sacrament means, The picture within. And the Gospel according to S. John is through and through sacramental.

Always here the inner meaning counts ultimately. The word for miracle is not ' power,' ' wonder ' (as in the other gospels), but ' sign,' and in the language of the early church ' sign ' meant effectual sign ; sign, symbol, sacrament, mystery were aspects of one reality. The meaning, purpose, sign of glory at Cana was not the wonder of a break in natural order, but a manifestation of the far-reaching influence of homely love and filial trust ; and (I think, as in the discourse of the Bread of Life) an enlarging and recovery of the purely spiritual import of the sacrament—the instituted sacrament—of the Last Supper. The water become wine rouses much thought upon the Bread and Wine which is the Flesh and Blood. The background of this gospel is the daily habit of sacramental devotion

in the church. Habit breeds carelessness formality and material superstition and controversial reverence. There is no account of the institution of the two great sacraments in this gospel, no direct teaching about these. But the recollection of them is continual. And always it is an intensified reality that is inculcated. The institution is set in the context of the whole practical life of every day, and the whole practical life of every day is opened and discovered as having at its core life eternal. This (says the Lord in S. John) is life eternal, to know the Father as God and Jesus Christ as whom the Father sent. To know, to know better and better, as sons and lovers know, this is eternal life. To be ever learning so to know is to celebrate sacrament everywhere and everywhen. In the far horizons of this universal vital sacrament the institutional sacraments, which are the flower of worship, get their effectual meaning.

In *Anima Poetae* (p. 61) this pregnant sentence from Coleridge's notebook is given:

"Meditate on trans-substantiation? What a conception of a miracle! Were one a Catholic, what a sublime oration might one not make of it? Perpetual, pan-topical, yet offering no violence to the sense, exercising no dominion over the free-will—a miracle always existing, yet perceived only by an act of the free-will—the beautiful fuel of the fire of faith—the fire must be pre-existent or it is not fuel,

yet it feeds and supports and is necessary to feed and support the fire that converts it into his own nature."

Strange words, not easy to follow into their recesses. Yet the thought though blurred still holds us. And it is a gladness to go about one's business with this consciousness of always being able, if we will, to see things changing from their dull, sad, vulgar, terrible appearance to the peace and buoyancy of their divine reality. That is what the Gospel of S. John shews us how to do. That is how this Evangelist saw common life and tragic life, the hungry multitude, the disputes with the Jews, the crucifixion. That is how the Lord Jesus in this gospel sees these things and enables his disciples to see. That is how this Evangelist, after the Lord had gone and was no more to be seen on earth, still knew him as present, still saw earth full of him, and though men died saw nothing anywhere but life, life abundant, life eternal here and now.

When Martha answered her Lord's "Thy brother will rise again" with that answer "I know that he will rise in the resurrection at the last day," we seem to hear the sad tone of her acquiescence. Yes, he will rise: that is our creed. At the last day: how far away. In the resurrection: how mysterious. Then the Lord added a different assurance: "I am the

resurrection and the life. He that trusteth on me, though he die shall live: and whosoever liveth trusting me shall in eternity not die." "I *am*": that is something here and now. "*I* am": that is the Master to the disciple; affection, loyalty, heart-bond; life-like because love-like. This is nearer than hope; it is experience. This is the Communion of saints added to the Resurrection of the dead.

Martha was doubtless consoled, though as yet she would hardly understand. Explanation was to follow in a few days. Not at once. Not in the calling of Lazarus from the tomb. That was a miracle to marvel at: it is not called a "sign." Is there not also a certain horror in it? The ghastly figure, moving, none saw how, bound in the grave-clothes, out of the dark cave. Loose him; let him go; said the Saviour. A brief happiness of visible companionship was restored to a family; but this was not life eternal. Such restoration, continuation of life in the bodily senses must be put away from the mind of those who were to learn the real consolation of eternal life.

The evening came and the Last Supper. The disciples gathered anxiously. What was to befall them? They thought their Lord would not be much longer with them. The supper was eaten lovingly. The Master washed their feet most lovingly. Three times he tried to save his

dear friend Judas from his crime. In vain, Judas went forth, into the night, about his dreadful work. Then the Lord cast off care : " Now is the Son of man glorified " : and turned with a free heart to cheer his disciples with the greatest theology that ever can be heard.

Before launching into its deep he repeated an assurance. Love one another. By this you will be disciples. What I am going to say you will understand, some more some less, part now part through further experience. But however that may be, this I promise : only continue to love one another as I have loved you, and all will always be well. If we purge and fortify this idea of love by his homely friendship and his heroic readiness to lay down life for friends, we have here the Johannine note of the Church.

Then the Lord goes on. Your anxiety, he says, issues from fact. I am indeed going. But you need not be anxious. Take no thought for the morrow : I have to tell you of here and now. For this going is not going away. In a little while I go : in a little while I come. For this going is to the Father, and going to the Father is not a journey from one place on the earth to another or from earth to some other place. This journey is measured by no lapse of time. This going is coming—coming nearer, deeper, inward, downward. Think not of earth and sky, heaven and hell, but of that real whole which is my

Father's house. In that house there are many mansions; stages, spheres, resting-places—emergent events as we say now in quasi-scientific jargon. What was the Saviour thinking of? Was it not of Galilee and its happy companionship? The fields, lake, mountain, the walks and talks, face to face and touch of hand and word of mouth: all that visible intercourse had made the enjoyment of the sweet mansion of the senses. But heart with heart also. That inward and invisible had been the meaning of all the rest. Now that inward and invisible is what will last, and more than last. Farewell and cross and death; fresh mystery flows now into the first completed experience. The juncture becomes emergent. If I go not. . . . But if I go the Comforter will come. He will remind you of the past, of you and me in the past together. He will guide you into a richer future, the future of truth, the mansion of the Spirit where you and I will be closer than together. Where I am ye shall be also: I in the Father and ye in me: all one perfectly united.

That is what our Lord has taught that his death may mean. That is what he prayed that his death might indeed effect. And I pray, he said, not for these alone who now see and hear me still, this little while, but for all in all time to come who shall trust through the word I have taught these.

"I am the resurrection and the life." Does not the Last Discourse explain? No "last day," but here and now. Communion of saints to substantiate Resurrection of the dead. A comfortable faith for a generation which is rising to a new day out of the shadow of a deadly war; and such a faith as rests on no bare authority or tradition, not even on the sacred record of the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth in the days of his flesh, but a faith which may be tested, proved, purified and enriched by plain experience here and now.

"And we also bless thy holy Name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear; beseeching thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom."

Memory is a mode of eternal life. To follow the good examples is an effect of grace, an experience of influence far more deeply interfused than the limitations of the senses, of merely personal intercourse, allowed. Whosoever hath a friend hidden in the Father with the living Saviour need wait for no last day to be partaker of the heavenly kingdom.

Such faith has difficulty. It ebbs and flows. Regret for the old companionship is insistent. We indulge fancy. But John and the Lord Jesus are not fanciful: they are reasonable. This is a faith for a new generation which will learn more

and more to trust through reason; through reason which is more purely divine than symbol, passion, rhetoric.

Again, this faith wanes when we ourselves indulge mere sense, desert the mansion of the Spirit, act, feel or think unworthily of the "good examples." Examine your lives and you will find that this faith is strongest when danger or hard duty or some noble joy makes you (for a brief season perhaps) quite forget yourself. Yet self-forgetting is not all: that is not quite the right way to put the case. Self-forgetting is emptying. Life more abundant; "my joy" in them and their joy full; that is the message of this gospel. "No man cometh to the Father but by me." After all we are led back to that profound idea. It is an idea: not just a matter of fact: the idea which informs matters of fact, such as the Incarnation, the Death and Resurrection, the history of Jesus, the history of the world, the operations of nature and the interdependence of man with nature, and the history of each of us in our several circumstances. By the Word made flesh, but still by the Word, we come to the Father. He who draws us is more than a person in history. And through him we are more, but also far less, than ourselves. Self-expression: my own experience is ultimate: that is indeed one cry of the new generation. But is it not an imperfect formula? Let me conclude with two quotations; one from

*Science and the modern world*, the latest book of Dr A. N. Whitehead, who is (to say the least) one of the strongest thinkers of our time :

" In these lectures I am giving the outline of what I consider to be the essentials of an objectivist philosophy adapted to the requirement of science and to the concrete experience of mankind. Apart from the detailed criticism of the difficulties raised by subjectivism in any form, my broad reasons for distrusting it are three in number. One reason arises from the direct interrogation of our perceptive experience. It appears from this interrogation that we are *within* a world of colours, sounds and other sense-objects, related in space and time to enduring objects such as stones, trees and human bodies. We seem to be ourselves elements of this world in the same sense as are the other things which we perceive. But the subjectivist makes this world, as thus described, depend on us, in a way which directly traverses our naïve experience, and that is why I lay such stress on the evidence of poetry. My point is, that in our sense-experience we know away from and beyond our own personality ; whereas the subjectivist holds that in such experience we merely know about our own personality. . . . My third reason is based upon the instinct for action. Just as sense-perception seems to give knowledge of what is beyond individuality, so action seems to issue in an instinct for self-transcendence. The activity passes beyond self into the known transcendent world. It is here that final ends are of importance. For it is not activity urged from behind, which passes out into the veiled world

of the intermediate subjectivist. It is activity directed to determinate ends in the known world; and yet it is activity within the known world. It follows therefore that the world, as known, transcends the subject which is cognisant of it. . . . Nature exhibits itself as exemplifying a philosophy of the evolution of organisms subject to determinate conditions. Examples of such conditions are the dimensions of space, the laws of nature, the determinate enduring entities, such as atoms and electrons, which exemplify these laws. But the very nature of these entities, the very nature of their spatiality and temporality, should exhibit the arbitrariness of these conditions as the outcome of a wider evolution beyond nature itself, and within which nature is but a limited mode."

Thus the scientific man speaks of his world of nature within which men live and out of which strange avenues appear to stretch shadowily into a larger yonder sphere. I know how silly it is (especially for a person uneducated in these matters) to embroider theology upon science. But I fancy Dr Whitehead himself would not forbid my setting over against his paragraphs these verses from the Gospel of that Word by whom all things were made, apart from whom no thing was made, in whom all that hath been made was life, and that life the light of men. Nor would he forbid my adding that what I have quoted from him helps me to recognise a fresh

significance in what I now quote from the Gospel :

" Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine ; so neither can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches : he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit : for apart from me ye can do nothing."

# X

## THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

But that fair Lamp, from whose celestial Ray
That Light proceeds which kindleth Lovers Fire,
Shall never be extinguisht nor decay;
But when the vital spirits do expire,
Unto her native Planet shall retire:
For it is heavenly born and cannot die,
Being a parcel of the purest Sky.

For when the Soul, the which derived was
At first out of that great immortal Spright,
By whom all live to love, whylom did pass
Down from the top of purest Heavens hight
To be embodied here . . .
For of the Soul the Body Form doth take;
For Soul is Form, and doth the Body make.

. . . . .

Cease then my Tongue, and lend unto my Mind
Leave to bethink how great that Beauty is
Whose utmost Parts so beautiful I find;
How much more those essential Parts of his,
His Truth, his Love, his Wisdom, and his Bliss,
His Grace, his Doom, his Mercy and his Might,
By which he lends us of himself a sight.

EDMUND SPENSER.

THE last chapter was in some sort a recapitulation of all our precedent meditation. It concentrated on the Gospel according to S. John which

is the recapitulation of the New Testament, the apostolic doctrine as it runs its course through the first century. But the Gospel according to S. John is also the starting point of a fresh era in the faith, and now we start from it afresh to put our preliminary thought in order and settle our minds in the certainties which emerge from our selective—perhaps austerely selective—acceptance of reasonable revelation concerning God, our self or soul, and life.

This is the gist and purpose of what I have been trying to write. I have not written easily ; am too well aware that even to myself my thought has not reached the simplicity of clearness ; I am afraid of being misunderstood, of stupidly misleading. Therefore I beg leave to repeat and enlarge some things already said, begging indulgence if this be tedious or superfluous.

When Lazarus died our Lord went to Bethany and Martha came to meet him. " Lord if thou hadst been here, she said, my brother had not died. And even now . . ." Jesus said " Thy brother will rise again." And Martha said " I know that he will rise in the resurrection at the last day." We can fancy that we hear the very tone in which she said the words, for we hear something so like it still from so many lips, and in our own hearts we hear it. Yes, we believe that. It is in the creed and we sincerely assent

to it. But the resurrection is a mystery beyond understanding and the last day is very far away from here and now: in such assent there is little consolation. Then the Lord said "I am the resurrection and the life. . . . Believest thou that?" And Martha answered "Yea Lord, I do believe," and seems to have been satisfied.

And so perhaps are most of us who read, at least while we are reading. For there is some quality in this narrative by which we are so affected that we seem to be ourselves present at each point of time and place and to share the thoughts and feelings of the actors in it. "I *am*": that is here and now, present experience: and experience is what we trust. "*I* am": that is a personal assurance which springs from love and confidence and loyalty towards a Master. We know from the ten former chapters of this Gospel what this Master was proving to be to Martha; and the relationship is realised by the modern reader too, at least while he reads, while he is carried along by the story and made a part of it; and we like her are satisfied.

Satisfied: yes for the present. But perhaps neither we nor she could say precisely how. We imagine her calmed but not yet understanding. And the disciples who had come from Galilee with the Lord must have wondered what he really meant. A few days hence they were to receive profound enlightenment from the discourse at the

Last Supper. But before that and at once their minds were to be purged for the reception of that enlightenment by a disturbing spectacle, the evocation of Lazarus from the tomb.

Why did our Lord delay to go to Bethany? Why on arrival did he wait, outside the village, to have his quiet word with the sisters? Why did he groan in the spirit and trouble himself and weep? Notice the repeated "four days dead," and "by this time he stinketh." Be honest in imagination. Realise the horror as well as the pathos of the scene. How did the corpse, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, move and rise and come? What did it look like? Is this the resurrection and the life, this horror? "Loose him, said the Lord, and let him go."

All this was done "because of the multitude." Many who beheld believed. The chief priests and the Pharisees were disturbed. To this evangelist, for whose apprehension all natural events were absorbed in "eternal life," it was doubtless a very little thing that a man who had been dead four days should be recovered from the tomb. But this was not the life which is eternal to him or to Martha or to any who read his Gospel understandingly. We might know as much as that from many words and deeds of the Lord which are recorded in his earlier pages. In the discourse at the Last Supper he will make it abundantly clear. He generally designates what we

call " miracles " as " signs " or sacraments. He does not himself refer to this miracle by that expressive name. This miracle is purgative. When we pass to the theology of the Last Supper we are to listen with minds cleared from all desire for that consolation in the face of death which is tied to the senses.

" Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."

The hour has come; the hour of departure; the hour of love intensified and reaching its end, beyond the limits of the natural world; in the home of the Father. There is the plain theme in its five divisions. The evangelist wastes no time. The supper, the breaking of the bread, the known and oft told story he stays not to tell again, but launches at once into the new things he is inspired to declare.

Love is the beginning and the end of this news. He writes the word itself in his opening lines; then shews its nature, homely and natural, in the washing of the feet; and its process beyond nature in the short dialogue with S. Peter. Then another manifestation of the same effectual love in the Master's attempt to save his dear friend Judas from his crime. Three appeals he made;

the sharing of the sop, extremest pledge of special affection, was the second; the stern dismissal was the last. All failed as far as could be perceived or history tell. The Lord's ministry is a series of such immediate failures. "He then having received the sop went out straightway: and it was night." Love baffled; dark night; tragic consequence; all ways blocked now but the one way of death. And 'Now' saith Jesus, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him; and God shall glorify him in himself, and straightway shall he glorify him." This is the glory that is adumbrated in the epistle to the Hebrews when it says that we have seen one man crowned with glory "for the suffering of death": this divine glory is glory in, not after, humiliation. Now, when all is lost, this glory shines, it shines through darkness.

Hitherto a certain sadness has brooded over the feast. A hurried gathering anticipatory of the passover: a gathering of anxious disciples who fear they know not what: foreboding deepened by the strange dealing with Judas and his ominous departure: the Lord's own kindness had a wistful tinge. Now he casts all such care away: turns gloriously to cheer his friends: prepared to do so by the utterance of a theology more profound than any which had ever been heard before, and which grows clearer and accumulates meaning as generation succeeds

generation, and the hearts into which it comes grow simpler and kinder.

Let us pause for a moment to make a slight correction in the text of our Bible. No Greek word needs to be altered; merely a stop in the punctuation and a touch to the translation of a single word. This done, we read verses 33 and 34 as follows:

"Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and whereas I said unto the Jews, Whither I go ye cannot come; so now I say unto you, A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another."

"Whither I go ye cannot come" is quite different from what follows to S. Peter "Whither I go thou canst not follow me now"; and would be sheer contradiction of all the promise and explanation that is about to be delivered. The Lord is going: but this "going" will be a "coming": and where he is there his disciples will also be: and all this at no future point of time, but here and now. That is the argument of the discourse.

And the love, love of Master and disciples, is the key. Before he starts upon argument, reasoning, theology, the Lord insists once more upon this fellowship of love. When reasoning is concluded, he will reiterate it. He seems to mean just this:—I am about to tell you deep

truths: you will understand, some more some less, part now part through experience still to come: but care not about that: always, in every condition, if only you go on loving one another I promise that you will find all is well.

Then he comes to the point. "I am going": what the disciples vaguely feared is definitely fact, he is to die, their old companionship is ended. But again "I am coming," and "in a little while." "A little while" means just the opposite of Martha's "at the last day." It does indeed recall or repeat that earliest Galilean proclamation, "The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is at hand"; but it is no mere repetition; as generally in this Gospel it is an interpretation. All is here and now. "I go" and "I come" are simultaneous and immediate. A little while must indeed intervene; there must be the interval of the Passion. Then "I go" and then "I come." What is feared as the misery of parting will be the joy of a closer communion than has yet been experienced. Therefore the heart of the disciples need be in no wise troubled.

How can this be? The first answer is "Because I go to the Father." The Father is in heaven and heaven is not a place. This going is not like a journey on the earth. This coming is not from some quarter of the globe, more or less distant, accomplished in more or less

duration of time or at this or that hour or day. In this heavenly state or temper to go and to come may very well be two modes, or necessary correspondences, of one progress.

Nor does the Lord now speak of heaven. His disciples must now outgrow that picturing fancy of earth and heaven in antithesis. Heaven once meant the sky: then it meant another world: now there is no other world, all life is "the Father's house."

And in that house are "many mansions": that is "abiding places," stages of travel, varieties of condition, and so forth. The word suggests very many forms of incohate life; the different creeds, the good and evil ways of men, this and the other side of the grave. It is a picturing word but one that quickly forces you beyond the picture. For the Lord and his disciples that night it may have brought a vivid picture to the eye, the picture of the life in Galilee, the memory of happy days, a burst of intense affection. Picture memory affection; there is the sequence; from outward place and past time to the soul and the present moment and a joy in loving that overflows the fugitive moment and its accompanying grief, that eternal potency in short which the Lord in this Gospel is continually adumbrating with his "I am" I go" "I come" "Knowing the Father."

Galilee with its happy village seaside success-

ful days: Jerusalem the cruel bigoted city where that little band of lovers, cut off from the amenities of home, drew closer together facing the storm: that sweet "mansion of the senses" had already begun to fade, and now must be utterly abolished. "I go": those days are over: that kind of intercourse is finished: they are not to regret it, or try to restore it by fancy, or hope for it to return. The Master really goes. All that is over and done with. The mansion of the senses must be abandoned.

But "in my Father's universal house of life are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you and if I go and prepare a place for you, again I come and will take you to myself, that where I am ye may be also." There is another mansion deeper within reality, "nearer the Father." There they will still be together, and far more close together than seeing face and hearing voice and touching hands and walking and talking on Galilean hills could ever bring them. Though certainly that happy intercourse had been all the way of it a movement toward the new state: the new is not to contradict the old, a heaven displacing earth: all is continuous:—"And whither I go, ye know the way."

At this point in the dialogue they answer that they do not know the way any more than they

know the whither. But all becomes clearer as the Lord proceeds. Going to the Father is going to One in whom he already is and who is equally in him: that is the journey now to be taken. The disciples have already believed or trusted their Master about this. Already they have loved their Master and in loving have kept his commandments, and so they must continue to do; this trust and intercourse already begun long since is the way. And then comes the dominant term or name which clears up everything and makes this new idea a homely one: "I will ask the Father and he will give you another Comforter. . . . I will not leave you orphaned; I will come to you. . . . When the Comforter shall come, the Spirit of truth who proceedeth from the Father, he shall be witness to you of my presence. . . . I go and I come to you."

In the Spirit the Lord goes and comes: in the Spirit he is to abide with his disciples, closer to them than ever, in a new manner which nevertheless is not different from the old; for (if they remember rightly, and to such right remembering the Spirit will prompt them) the essence of all their olden intercourse had been by the Spirit though through the senses:—A new commandment I give unto you, that even as I have loved you so ye must love one another.

To whom did our Lord say all this? The evangelist does not tell precisely who were present.

He writes that "Jesus having loved his own that were in the world, loved them to the end." The phrases are chosen of purpose. Historically the Twelve are implied. But history is never an end in itself to this author. Throughout his Gospel three *strata* continually crop out: the original occasion; the instruction of the Ephesian Church; generations of believers yet to come. In no part of the book is this more evident than in this discourse at the Last Supper. "And not for these only do I pray, saith the Lord in the prayer which concludes the discourse, but also for those who successively trust on me through their word." We may safely take all this doctrine as applying to ourselves to-day.

It is the doctrine of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in the Communion of Saints." It does not supersede the "resurrection of the body," but it is additional and different. It is not contradictory of S. Paul, but S. Paul does not speak in just this language, and when he speaks of the dead as asleep, he does say something different.

The pictures and inscriptions in the Roman catacombs keep very closely to this Johannine Gospel. The catacombs preserve the simplicity of the primitive church at Rome. From that primitive family of unlearned faithful, by some spontaneous growth as it would seem, the Apostles' Creed sprang. In the Nicene Creed, composed by doctors and councils, there is no "communion of

saints." But these plain souls could not bear that. If not Paul, if not the tradition inherited from the synagogue, nay if it be rather the inveterate instinct of the nations than special Christianity—their heart desired "communion," and in their creed they must confess it.

The Gospel according to S. John confirms this decree of conscience by its authority: we have warrant of Scripture for the doctrine. It was not so when this Gospel was first published. For fifty years this Gospel lies obscure behind the history of the second century: there are signs of opposition to its modernism. To-day, when the difference from the earlier Gospels is recognised again, the same mistrust revives, and perhaps very many good churchmen prefer to rest upon the likeness ignoring the difference. And therefore not a few in hours of sorrow prove their faith inadequate: it cannot make them happy in bereavement.

To others the authority of Scripture is no longer of supreme importance. "The doom of reason writ in man's soul and heart" is to them, as it was to that fifteenth century champion of the ancient faith against innovators, Bishop Reginald Pecocke, more authoritative than any book however sacred. Not the Bible with its inspiration and its criticism, but What was Jesus of Nazareth, and how can Christianity be unique and final? will be the main question for the rising

generation. To these enquirers the Gospel of S. John will bring sympathetic wisdom. This evangelist restores both breadth and intensity to trite words. He will not speak of "faith" but he is always using the verb, and in its simplest profundity, not "believe" but "trust." Put this "trust" together with another well worn phrase "Son of God." Consider the strange manner in which the Lord in this Gospel handles that phrase. Look carefully at all his tremendous claims and their invariable association with promises of almost incredible expanse for other men, for all trustful men. And consider whether the Johannine claim of the Lord Jesus be not this: I am the Son of God, the only Son of the one Father; and my Father has sent me to tell you that if you will but trust me and come with me to Him, you shall be his sons just as I am.

And another of these Johanninely transformed or reformed words is "authority." In our version the Greek is generally translated "power," but "authority" or "right" would be more literal. See what kind of authority it always is: authority to be lowly and to suffer, to find life by dying, to become children. Not as a canonical book, but as agreeing with "the doom of reason writ in man's soul and heart" does this Gospel appeal assure warn judge.

And therefore we read this discourse in the light

of every-day experience, here and now. Do we not find the assurance trustworthy? Fathers mothers sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, comrades in duties; here are the relationships of our mansion of the senses. Out of the ground of blood and circumstance affections grow and deepen into love. And by degrees we feel, think out, and know the vital source of this capacity for spiritual growth: "We love, because he first loved us." Like all growth, so this is hindered by the limitations of language, intellectual dulness, haste, misunderstanding, but the limitations are stimulant, we learn the art of living. The real hindrance is the assertion of self. Even this helps man to know his brother and has a charm where love has attained virility. And if it be ultimately a hindrance pure and simple, it is just the one over which we have our own control, and it can be eliminated. The passing years help to eliminate it, as well as transforming all the external limitations. The insistence of the senses wears down as the bodily powers grow frailer. Friends draw closer, begin to grow into one another, as one or another has to make ready for his "going," as the Spirit more and more burns through and burns away the veil of flesh.

Then comes the hour of parting: for a while a stunning blow under which faith reels; at least some find it so, some whom the Psalmist knows

very well. But for gentle souls despair soon passes. The Spirit of life reasserts his influence ; and, again for a while, does this with miraculous clearness. Memory and affection become one state, a mode of present life ; it seems almost possible to live here and now in mere and pure spirit. To envisage death as an end is out of the question. Nearer than hands and feet and breathing is no poetic phrase but plainest fact. The survivor fancies that he understands perfectly the whole deep Johannine discourse about the mansion of the Spirit : or perhaps he knows Plato better than the New Testament and fancies that now the Phaedrus and the Phaedo prove their gospel truth, and the immortal soul is really free when death has delivered it from the burden of the flesh.

Plato changed his mind in later years and taught a humaner faith, in the Timaeus ; and so it has to be also for Christians. This happy quiet is involved in a certain retirement from the interests of life, from duties, from other people. Fancy, though it be immaterial, is mingled with it. The real influence of the Spirit will be more homely and effectual.

Effectual : for no power of life is spiritual but what is moral. The phrase " so follow their good examples " of our Communion prayer may need expansion or translation (for it is easy to extenuate such plain words), but it expresses

what is essential. The communion of saints becomes reality when your friend's goodness becomes vitally yours, when it is freed from the limitations which prevented your seeing it fully and using it thoroughly, when it passes into you and changes you into its likeness; that is, when he begins and continues more and more to live in you and you in him, and you thereby become a better person. For this is "he" not "it." S. Paul—for try as we may we cannot escape the "authority" of those apostolic writings—has not quite S. John's interest in the here and now of communion; he oftener looks forward to the future Day of prophetic tradition; but for him too all immortality is entirely spiritual. "Flesh and blood do not inherit"; the body that shall rise is altogether "spiritual"; and though he never defines that spiritual body he makes his vague notion of it evident enough in not unfrequent allusions. This immortal body, which is the eternal form of the immortal person, is "love joy peace," is only conceived in terms (as we say) of character, this (as he puts it in his old-fashioned language) is the new man, from heaven, whom we put on, whom we spend all this life here (into which we are sown at birth like a seed into the clay) in putting on, while the earthy senses of us continually wear away and are transformed by the Spirit in our mind.

So then it is when the immediate sorrow has

passed, and the first ecstasy of the new experience has passed also, and the multitude of ordinary friends are forgetting, and the one friend's name seldom enters into conversation, and the use and wont of business occupies the days, that a man may become conscious of a wholesome change coming over him. He is " following the good example " and a new power is in him to do this quietly steadily and very happily. It is the coming of the spirit that has gone to the Father, the new mode of the working of the one Spirit the life-giver. It is a moral power. He ought to become a better man, and old habits of evil should wear away. Freedom comes and with freedom happiness. Fresh interest awakes towards other persons and ordinary duties. For these get deeper meaning these too are spiritual, and the spirit is revealed : a splendour falls, the long light breaks across the surface of all things : studies too, worship, the sacraments of the church become simply and really sacramental : religion grows into reality : the imaginary partition between sacred and profane dissolves.

And anxiety goes. It becomes almost natural to take no thought for the morrow. There is no fatal dread of evil tidings : evil itself in all forms loses absoluteness : a gift, which is different from a native growth, of love casts out fear. The disciple enters the Father's house as did the boy Jesus : where *debts* are forgiven, as to the prodigal

son; and all is *non sibi sed toti*. Think of the *euthanasia* of Dr Adam, Rector of the Edinburgh High School, the serene self-forgetful ascension into the mansion of the Spirit, "But it grows dark, boys you may go."

## XI

### BY ME TO THE FATHER

That wondrous Pattern wheresoere it be,
Whether in Earth laid up in secret store,
Or else in Heaven, that no Man may it see
With sinful eyes, for fear it to deflore,
Is perfect Beauty which all men adore.

EDMUND SPENSER.

THIS then is the assurance of the Johannine discourse and its concluding prayer: that eternal life is here and now and always and everywhere; that soul or spirit, entering that eternal state, gains intercourse, communion, union with the souls it knows; that this is what our affection for one another means and depends upon, and this kind of communion or union can not be ended by death, nor has its persistence anything to do with continuance or revival of the particular life of the senses which we live (as we say) now on earth, nor even are questions of personal immortality (and such like) germane to it. This is a spiritual state. Spiritual means not material, of the senses, but purely, only spiritual. Spirit may be (for aught we know) essentially connected with

that "other" which we call vaguely matter. It looks to us in our experience (so far as that experience goes as yet) as though matter produces spirit; every-day, commonplace offices and relationships produce the love which then transforms all these; but what is that "then"? what real force is there in this time-succession of cause and effect? is it a real measure when we get to the measurement of what is spiritual? He giveth not grace by measure. We measure spirit by holiness by happiness by the vigour purity and peace of full life. We do not fancifully dream of another world, another time. Here and now we find spirit transforming the common things of experience. We do not destroy the mansion of the senses in order to pass into the mansion of the Spirit: we only lay aside its fancies. The main reality is that the Father's house is all that is and was and ever will be and we are, very simply, at home there. Or lay aside the metaphor, and confess that God is all; not merely that there is no other God beside the One, but that there is no time state or person except in God. There is no gulf between God and creature. The transcendence of God does not mean that. It does not mean that God is out of man's reach: nor that God must be limited or limit himself in order that he may reach man: nor that God can be reached only by some faculty different from man's known faculties in widest commonalty shared.

It does mean that every man may call God " our Father in heaven," meaning by the words no metaphor but the plainest thing that words can express.

Words indeed are inadequate for exact expression. But exact expression is no necessity for peace and life. Nothing is more certain in the intercourse of spirit, or friend with friend than that they understand one another without words. Who has ever practised visitation of sick and dying without learning that eternal life is ministered, not by explanations and complete confessions and consolations, but by turning together to God in terse prayer. Who has ever practised prayer without learning that intense quiet prayer culminates in the final Lord's Prayer, and then in silence ?

The final Lord's Prayer :—when all the confusion of personal desires fears purposes are sifted concentrated committed to the Saviour, for him, according to his wisdom, to transmit to the Father ; when the private personal self is forgotten ; when with the entrusted prayer (person and prayer undistinguished) and with the Son to whom it is entrusted, we ascend to his Father and ours, and know that he and we and all events ideas—things visible and invisible—are perfected into one. This is " to know the Father." This is eternal life.

In this knowing there is transcendence. This

Father is in heaven. The Heaven is not another world beyond experience; nor is the Father another God delimited out of the Absolute and Whole. Nor is prayer and knowing this Father different in kind from logical thought. It is a consummation of one line of logical developement, that which clears away the contradictions which are illogical in the direct exercise of spirit. Such a contradiction is the divided prayer of enemies at war each for his own victory. But divided prayer is illogical. In the final Lord's Prayer it goes out.

And there is transcendence in the practical relation of the prayer to experience. Ordinary, mere, confused experience is transcended. There, a trouble is imminent: the chain of events makes it certain this trouble must come. Prayer lifts beyond all that calculation, and purifies away what is troublesome from the trouble. The Prayer Book gives no petition for deliverance from enemies, but from the fear of enemies. There, our impotence and thwarting circumstance; we cannot do what we would. In prayer we pass beyond that contradiction. We commit our destiny to Him who has already set its lines, our All to The Living and Loving All, and the necessary power for the really necessary act is already ours.

And in prayer the division caused by death is transcended. Certainly death is a deep-cut line

in the map of human experience. It is an awful change. If death were the entrance into the mansion of the Spirit few indeed might hope to enter. But death is not the entrance, though to many a one his friend's death is the occasion of seeking entrance. The entrance is here and now. And even though we enter but a little at a time, and though we fall out of the spiritual state again and again after entering, still the way, narrow though it be, is open, and entrance may be renewed and extended and prolonged. Prayer is a means to this; and an especially practical means, for it is a voluntary exercise, to be sought used improved by ourselves; not an extraordinary impulse serving and compelling as it were by chance. Now in prayer we are ranged "with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven": for the eucharistic sacrament (where this incomparable phrase has its proper place) is, from our side, in its essence, prayer: give prayer and sacrament widest and simplest meaning and the two pass in and out of one another. In prayer we are ranged with all the company of heaven: the "Dearly beloved brethren" of the Prayer Book adopts from the Epistle to the Hebrews the idea that we go to heaven, "the throne of grace," when we pray. And there, in that company we find our friend. Only, if we would find him, we must be reasonable. We must accept the idea literally, not as a sapless

nor as a limitless metaphor. It is not sapless metaphor. This is an effort and achievement, given to us effectuated by us, of plain quotidian experience. This is practice and reality of the Communion of Saints. On the other hand this practice and reality has its limiting rules. Here all is in the mansion of the Spirit and we may not try (so vainly) to recover the old satisfaction of the mansion of the senses. We may not fancy form voice body, as these were, or as these would now be according to lapse of years since death parted us: we may not, except of course as innocently wandering fancy not as the sure and certain hope, create an expectation of recovering these things at a future time or in another place. We are in heaven now, and have no care for time place or even the private property of love: if "person" means such private property, let us bind pride and quench passion and recognise this condition as impersonal.

That is hard to agree to. Let it not be more closely defined as dogma against dogma. Person, personality: much moves within such terms which is dark, divinely possible, close bound with religion, morality, the evolving history of man and nature; let hope and faith hold sway where so they may. But the loose obstinacies of mere personal feeling are not included in such a mansion of the Spirit as experience here and now assures us of.

" True, we hope and believe that all which we call body is in some sense an incarnation of spirit. Nevertheless it is an incarnation, and is not a mere state of mind. We experience natural objects as full concrete existences, with real qualities of colour and sound and splendour. Externality is a character of the world and a sign and vehicle of spiritual achievement, and there can be no doubt that the creative imagination yearns towards externality." (Bernard Bosanquet : *Science and Philosophy and other Essays* : 1927.)

" Yearns," but what of that ? Mansion of senses—of Spirit ? Does not the passage thither demand just the renunciation of externality, of colour sound and splendour ; a real renunciation ? And is this not especially demanded when we apply the doctrine to concentrate and interpret experience, so that we may know we have communion with those companions whom we will not call dead ? Those companions themselves ; they live and blessedly. But do they enjoy colour sound and external splendour ? We say too lightly that they are better off " there." We know not what we mean : we are letting meagre fancy in. A young life cut short is pitiful. There is loss, bitter loss, renunciation. There are some who have spent a longer life here in the beauty of forgetting self and devotion to others, and death cuts into that beauty : death comes as one more deep renunciation. From all points

of view, but especially from this, the mansion of the Spirit is revealed as a mansion of renunciation.

But renunciation is not destruction or deprivation. It is transcendence. The quality renounced dissolves and resolves in the maturer state. What colour sound and splendour stood for, these symbols of our externality, lives deeper though less separately in the purely spiritual state where symbol has place no further. This is not a fanciful assertion. It is thoughtful; for all analogy of experience confirms and illustrates it. If there is a Communion of Saints which we may really enjoy in sane and strong morality, the enjoyment must come through some stretching of ordinary experience: in some degree we must invade the condition of pure spirit. Prayer is just such an invasion, daring passionate but far more submissive receptive. In prayer we go to heaven. From prayer we return, and learn that this going is like our Lord's going to the Father, a spiritual journey through the things of sense; nor less purely spiritual because through things of sense. The antithesis is temporal, makeshift, convenient not absolute. "The consonance is complete except for rhetoric." There are not two distinct mansions, heaven and earth, of the senses of the Spirit—perhaps not even of the converted and the still remorseful yearning soul —the master truth is that all the many mansions are in the one complete house of the Father.

Conditions may be very different on " this " and on " that " side of the terribly imaginative line of death, but the differences do not thwart communion. Through all conditions the Spirit transcends, refreshes life, preserves unity, and preserves by carrying onward.

Few will dispute that those who have passed out of this external life exercise more effectual influence than before their passage. This is a commonplace in speaking of famous men, poets apostles rulers conquerors. A book means more to later generations than when a few first read it and understood it according to the science and conscience of that age. Later readers must do without that immediate acquaintance of the author which eye ear neighbourhood furnished to contemporaries ; but later readers who are constant students know him better than contemporaries could ; he lives more near to them ; their communion with him is interpenetrative, and the more so because it is not private property ; jealous conceit is pitiful and misers in the republic of letters are fatuous.

But leaving famous men and large historic action, would any plain person, who remembers a dead friend and cares about good life, hesitate in his assurance that his friend still lives in him —nearer than breath—and imparts his " good example " more purely and unhindered than

before? If so, the further thought arises: Shall I do this when I have died? How? Shall I know that I do it? Will my knowledge of people events etc. last? Will I go on forming purposes, anxious about issues, offering prayers . . . I, what shall I be then?

Has the Communion of Saints any answer to such a question? Surely none. Their influence on us is a most real part of our experience: what will become of me? is a matter that lies quite outside my experience as yet. Perhaps you may find an answer in revelation, in the Bible or otherwise. That answer will at least need much interpretation to make it precise or practical. The Book of Daniel and the early Pharisees thought some such answer had been vouchsafed. The Prophets and old-fashioned Jewish Churchmen like the son of Sirach thought not. Our blessed Lord in a few parables made a few symbolic picture-touches on the question: but he referred when pressed to Moses at the Bush; he bade men not be too thoughtful for the morrow; his last prayer was the Psalmist's, Father into thy hands I commend my Spirit.

Throughout these chapters we have been thinking more through others, of the something given, than of ourselves, what we can bring. We have noticed that all has always become clear in proportion to our forgetfulness of self. We started by glancing at that strange puzzle: Myself: my

consciousness of self : and You, thus conscious, who are you ?

Mr Mallock in one of his stories has the fancy that our self is like the rather colourless heroes in some of Sir Walter Scott's romances, whose function is to be the spectator ; his view holds the course of events, the whole drama, together ; thanks to him, vague in himself, the interwoven interests of all are vivified. One of the early Italian sonneteers thinks of his soul or self as a visitant moving in the chambers of his mind. That is an idea worth reflexion. It makes our soul or self important, as in that passage in the epistle to the Hebrews where the persecuted Christians are encouraged to take the spoiling of their goods cheerfully, because they have a better and abiding possession in their own soul or self. From this point of view your ' self ' is more than ' you.' It is one with you because it moves in and holds the chambers of your being. But perhaps it is more than you, more in each of us than any one of us can separately be. Throughout the apostolic part of the New Testament we find the early Christians living a New Life which is the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus as he is called in one place in Acts—according to the primitive text ; for here, as so often, the later church emasculated the bold apostolic theology. But it is to be diligently marked that nowhere do we find the apostolic Christians

claiming a separate possession of the Spirit. He is the One Spirit of the whole Body of the faithful. Is not this our true self?

In many periods places phases of faith, something like this has been dreamed. The Brahmin held that he must give up his private self: so he would find his true self in Brahma, the one Spirit of the Whole: he would be That. The Buddhist would absolutely lose himself in the One, the All, the Nought: he desires no finding self at all. Give up that and all desire; then goodness, peace, is possible. The Moslem Sufi seeks the One, often it seems with passionate religious love. "When you have said One be constant. Being constant means that you must never say Two again"—a hard doctrine for a European mind. Something like this runs through Shelley's poetry. It comes clearly at the end of the verses on the *Euganean Hills*. All day he has been looking down upon the Lombard plain, meditating on the fierce suffering of the history of the past, musing and hoping and fearing for the future. Evening begins to come and a strange harmony begins to permeate all things:

. . . . .
And of living things each one;
And my spirit, which so long
Darkened this swift stream of song,
Interpenetrated lie
By the glory of the sky;
Be it love, light, harmony,

Odour, or the soul of all
Which from heaven like dew doth fall,
Or the mind which feeds this verse
Peopling the lone universe.

Shelley's idea is that his private spirit is indeed the instrument, but the imperfect thwarting instrument, of the one Spirit which uses him and possesses all ; and that at the right hour and for a season, the one Spirit supersedes and transforms its partial divisions, and then unimpeded truth shines out, a blessed hope which guarantees its own assurance.

And some fine words may be allowed quotation from Mr Bosanquet, writing on this very point, " Life and finite Individuality " :

" This reality : is it the self as we experience it in detail ? Surely not ; or it is that self but in an illumination more intense than the customary and revealing a further structure. It *is* a substance and an ultimate subject but not in its own right. Its existence bears the stamp of the fragmentary and provisional. Can there be any one who does not feel it so in every act and thought ? But through all this, and operative in it, there shines the intentional unity. It is not my monad nor my star. It is the life which lives in me, but is more of that life than I succeed in living." (*Science and Philosophy and other Essays*, p. 104.)

Do not such reflexions tend to fill out the meaning of S. Paul's " I am crucified with Christ and

yet I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me": and our Lord's "Whosoever would save his life, soul, self (*psyche*) shall lose it, but whoso will lose it for my sake and my good tidings shall find it": and all that discourse in S. John about "going" and "coming" and laying down life for friends, and eternal life in knowing God as Father and the Son whom the Father sent, and the other Comforter, and All perfected into one?

But "for my sake and my Gospel"; Christ; the Son whom the Father sent:—why this? Is this necessary to such a doctrine as we have been feeling after? Do not those affinities and illustrations, Indian, Moslem, Shelleyan, shew that men have known the Father and may know the Father, without confessing Christian faith?

That question no doubt occurred to the Johannine evangelist. He answers it firmly from the lips of his own Lord whose life he interprets: "No one cometh to the Father except through me." But he does not produce this answer abruptly. In his Prologue he starts from what may fairly be termed a philosophic idea. Suddenly and soon he breaks out from this upon an event in the history of Palestine, the coming of John the Baptist. His interpretation, his theology, shall appeal to the reason and experience of men; and that can only be by applying such experience to his idea. Ideas are only grasped by finding them

at every-day work. In the vague they are but abstractions. They shew their reality as they complete transform rationalise eternalise the particularities of what men know as actual life. Things happen ; things are suffered or have to be done. The idea descends and these things become duties loves and hopes. And so this evangelist meets the idle dream of Fatherhood and Oneness, and a faith that all can hold because none can prove it fancy or truth, by telling once more a definite story, writing the record of a life actually lived by a man among men on earth. Only he will so tell it that those who read shall be led to meditate question and discern the idea which it embodies and discloses ; and that idea is nothing less than the Incarnation of the Eternal Word. If the history really does disclose that, then indeed that " No one . . . but by me " is true. Real history does not chronicle repetitions but significant acts of life, each involved in its own particular character, growing out of and extending into the vast complexity of the whole, yet never a mere equivalent, always (to use the evangelist's own phrase) *monogenes* " only begotten." And this " Incarnation " : there could not be, and he may fairly challenge his readers to say whether there had ever been, a same to this.

It is a challenge not an inevitable argument. Yet a reasonable challenge. First, consider how the idea of Incarnation affects the breadth of the

claim; exclusion is not its character. The Prologue moves through a series of larger than personal terms, light life grace truth. Throughout his ministry the Lord recurs allusively to these; his parables in this Gospel have this as their distinctive stamp. At the Last Supper he seems to lay aside the limiting relations of the now finished sojourn and once more to robe himself in these eternities: "I am the way, the truth, the life." Thus it is not just the Master of Galilee who declares that none can come to the Father except through him, but the divine way that makes events into history, the truth where and when ever it is found, the life that in all ways is life indeed. Here is the light that has always been coming into the world. Hereby many may come to the Father even though they confess not the faith of Christ crucified.

This extended Christ, on whom the soul of the whole wide world has dreamed, is one aspect of this Gospel's informing idea. We have already glanced at this evangelist's dissatisfaction with the too narrowly national title Christ; and there is no need to labour the suggestion further. It is perhaps worth while to notice that this is an instance of what so constantly appears: the evangelist in so doing is not inventing but interpreting; he draws his novelty from the primitive records. His unwillingness to use the title Christ is his explanation of the "Son of man" in the

Galilean Gospels. What did the Lord mean by that term? S. Stephen in Acts is the last to repeat it. Paul drops it, or did not know it. John is the first to recognise that it is difficult to understand. In his Gospel the Jews ask, what they never seem to need in the early Gospels to ask, "Who is this Son of man?" Since John every student of the New Testament has been asking the question, and many and various are the answers proposed. Some decide that our Lord never did use the term, there is some error in the record. Some refer it to Daniel, some add Enoch to Daniel; making it a Messianic claim. Others refer to the Psalms or Ezekiel, and make it a profession of humanity. As early as Matthew and Luke, the second stage of the written Gospels, it has become equivalent to "Me" on our Lord's lips. But in Mark that is not so. In Mark there is perhaps no passage where it is necessary to give the term any but its natural Hebrew meaning, a poetic typifying designation of "man." In Aramaic—at least some good scholars think so—it would not mean so much as that, but merely and prosaically, "a man": and it cannot be allowed that Dalman (who is more than a good scholar) has, by his negatives, proved the large emphatic significance.

However Our Lord, if he generally spoke Aramaic, knew the (Hebrew) Bible of his Church, and we may safely bring that into consideration.

Whence it might seem not unreasonable to suppose that he did use the term with a meaning of some mystic virtue for his own mind, and for any other mind that cared to be in harmony with his: in some such measure he gently cloaked his message in his parables. Thus understood, Son of man in our Lord's speech, is more than a Messianic, it is an Incarnation title. It implies not, I the Christ; nor, I the man; but, I and all mankind. And so, when ever Christhood is offered or demanded of him, he turns from it to this larger purpose of the Incarnation. Thou art the Christ, said S. Peter. And now the Son of man goes to Jerusalem to die and on the third day rise, answered the Lord. We read remembering the Creed. He spoke remembering Hosea. Ecce Homo: Would death with that definite reversal of death's doom, clearly foreseen, have been our death? But, I shall die, and in a very little while my dying shall prove new life, not for me only, but for mankind, the Son of man; that is the Incarnation in all its depth and breadth; "not by conversion of Godhead into flesh, but by taking of manhood into God."

This comprehension of the Idea is no optimistic easiness. "He came unto his own and his own received him not. To as many as received him he gave authority to become sons . . ." S. John's Gospel, and still more austerely his Epistle, distinguishes from the whole of mankind

in whom the vivifying and illuminating Word dwells, the little company of those whom the Spirit already quickens to the New Life. These are they who receive the incarnate Lord: who know him lovingly, who answer to his claimless invitation—Trust me and come with me to the Father and you shall be sons just as I am his Son. When Gospel and Epistle were written these were a little flock, a little fellowship of brethren: outside, the whole world still lay in wickedness. The Word was even then vital throughout the whole world: now the little fellowship has spread wider. It is no longer true that the whole world lies in wickedness. The Incarnation with its dying and rising has done more than create a fresh possibility: it has effected much. It has effected more than is visible and measurable. John in his exclusions excludes the term Church. His *Koinonia*, fellowship, is to Church what the Word is to Christ. It is not an institutional term, but indicates an idea, immeasurable pervasive, not bound to place time dogma or formulated creed. Where men come with him to the Father, there the Incarnate Son has his will, enjoys "authority" (another well worn word to which John brings novel currency), accepts all the honour that he claims. "I assume, says Miss Kingsley in one of her books on West Africa, that the whole desire of every man is to know God." "This is one of

those sayings which fill us with delight," is Mr Bosanquet's comment: whom I cannot refrain from quoting again, having read his volume of posthumous *Essays* as I write this chapter, and being filled therefrom with a delight like this of his, and finding something so Johannine in almost every essay.

But there is no false foreshortening in the Johannine picture of the future. The evangelist vaticinates no perfection by course of time. His "Here and Now," his ideal appeal to and through experience is one of the interpretative touches in his "Life of our Lord." Thus he draws out the Galilean "Take no thought for the morrow." In his own Here and Now the fellowship was a very little company still; and he could, for that reason and perhaps for other reasons, understand the still smaller company of friends whom the Lord gathered close and closer about him in the days of his flesh, so loyal and loving, with that intense and homely affection which deepened into the same glory and the same unity in the Father's house that he himself came from and returned to, "for us men and for our salvation."

He was near enough to know and perhaps remember that. He understood how that little primitive band of brothers and devoted disciples would have no doubt at all about "No one cometh to the Father but by me." And, certainly, he was himself far enough advanced on the later

course of events to understand by actual experience how a trust and loyalty and devotion no less intense was natural to those of the young generation who in their turn trusted by means of their predecessors' apostolic witness. " Whom, though you see not, yet you trust with joy unspeakable and full of glory." His experience was no private peculiarity. There it is in the Epistle of S. Peter ; just the same.

And so it still is. We may blunt its keenness by reading classicising Julianic poetry. We may daunt it by observing too censoriously (or conscientiously) the artificiality of contemporary church life worship dogma morals. But when we let ourselves go, or when we take a quiet considerate hour of catholic recollection, we know how goodly is our heritage. Christendom : The Saviour of the world : Ecce Homo : Christ is risen : Even so, Come Lord Jesus :—These are not drugs to bemuse, but wholesome awakening inherited influences of nature wonderfully constituted and still more wonderfully renewed. For us, at any rate of the Fellowship, these are the response to " No one but by me."

A flourish of mere phrases betrays the failure of argument. In John's quiet page there is no flourish, but there is a power of phrase which almost persuades the reader that " mere phrase " is a fallacious objection : these phrases of power are not " mere," they are always disclosures of

truth. "The Word was made flesh" is the phrase which has renewed the world. Have we then been cheated by the perfection of the phrase, and is the renewal a continuance of illusion? Or could the perfection of the phrase never have been fashioned but for the truth of the assertion which follows: And he dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, as of an only begotten son of a father, full of grace and truth? Not out of "mere" statements, but by the inspired craftmanship of the myths of Plato is that strange effect produced—the lapse into the divine dream of primal nature in which, spite of all the complications of logical analysis, and all the contradictions of hard apparent fact, man knows what has been, is, and ever shall be; God hearing and answering, the reality of the good, the good purpose of life. The way the tale is told is the effective influence, not the mere tale, fiction or history, itself. And this because it is the touch of nature, making kin, or rather recovering kinship. For these truths are the truths that are naturally known by man, by all men. These are the stuff and form of human nature. However and whenever man came into being these knowings were his: that was his coming into manhood, the awakening to this knowledge.*

In the Gospel according to S. John this is expressed as the doctrine of the Word in whom

* See J. A. Stewart: *The Myths of Plato*, Introduction.

all things were made, and who is the life of all creation and the light of all men. And John has seen this light in one man perfectly, and from that one man pervading the little company of his disciples. And he has imparted this experience to generations and generations in a story: not by merely telling the story, but by touching it throughout with the magic, the given magic or inspiration of phrase; and therefore as we read we trust, not an illusion but the natural fount and source of our humanity.

Once more, I cannot refrain from quotation, quoting the very noble testimony of a veteran servant of letters to the divine quality of his profession:

"One thing, if I may, I will add. Some may say, 'Oh! this is frivolous: at best it is literature, not religion.' Well Sir, for my part, I hold that of all exercises of human faculty Literature and Art 'tread nearest to God'; and I think the more we can avail ourselves of their company in His service the better." (George Saintsbury—Letter to The Times on Saints' Days in the Prayer Book: S. Valentine's Day 1927.)

Yet one brief reflexion more. He who wrote this Gospel might or might not approve of the arguments or quasi-arguments which have here been collected. For himself he would not desire them. His "only begotten" is the very refutation of "unique" or "separate." Dr McTaggart

said that a mystic has an extra-ordinary sense of the oneness of all. Then John is a mystic. He uses no such word, but he does use again and again the word *Theoria*, contemplation, reverie. And oneness is the goal and already dominant comfort of his gospel. All one in the Father; Jesus, the Word, Ecce Homo, the disciples; all perfected into One; all differences transcended. To him all history is Incarnation; always at all places, in an infinite gradation, reflecting the one light that shone in Galilee.

This daring breadth this firm simplicity is the harmony of a settled mind, knowing because still learning, with no premature anxiety to define. He sees already just "the Christ of the Creed 'by whom all things were made,'" the friend of fishermen, "the young Prince of Glory" who interpreted the invisible God by a gracious life and a wondrously sacrificial death.

## XII

### THE SACRIFICE

No doubt the fourth gospel differs in its history and theology from the three; but in the broad thorough-going line it coincides: in the mystery of the holy Incarnation, Nativity and Baptism; Cross and Passion; precious Death and Burial; glorious Resurrection and Ascension. Fasting and Temptation have their equivalent. The second part of Luke's treatise is anticipated in the coming of the Holy Ghost. These are the things that belong to salvation. This Gospel shews more evidently why. Therein is its theology; which differs only in explicating what had been implicit in the earlier works, as for instance The kingdom of God at hand, in Mark; The kingdom among or within you, in Luke; The hour cometh and now is when they who hear shall live . . . and whoso trusts the Father enters not into judgement but hath already passed out of death into life, in John.

In all three earlier gospels the ministry leads forward to the Passion. The Passion is told at greater length, with more touching solemnity

than all that precedes. Healing teaching and disputes with Pharisees are by themselves of less account than this action. Here is the explanation of the whole history: we feel it so, but cannot quite say why.

So felt the Johannine evangelist as he read listened conversed and meditated; and in his Life of the Lord Jesus he set himself to make the Why evident. His art was of the story-teller: he keeps to that impressive yet homely and delightful way. He adopts the tradition of Lazarus rising from the tomb which his more critical predecessors had rejected: he will fashion it in his own bold transformation into an echoing portico to his culminating epic. He brings the Master and his disciples to the very heart of their friendship, so human and now to shine out so divine, by the selection and arrangement of the incidents of the Last Supper. Into those incidents he plants brief pregnant dialogue. He sends forth Judas into the night, and thereby draws the line of glory across, then turns the page. Then—not a sermon, still a conversation: Master with disciples: Galilean plainness in the rumorous Jerusalem, cordial free speech in this brief shelter from the storm of bigotry. Thus by gradual natural imperceptible movement of mind with mind, the Master's with the disciples', the evangelist with ours his far-off readers, Deity supervenes. Deity supervenes as never

before. It was a useful hastiness of the first adventurers in criticism which produced the erroneous picture of the Johannine supernatural Christ in contrast with the real humanity of the synoptists. Look longer and the tremendous claims throughout the Johannine ministry reveal their subtler colour. Not incredible deity but surprising breadth and depth of faith in the nature and destiny of men is the novelty of this history. But that surprising faith has led the reader on, preparing for something deeper at last. And now that arrives. In the long conversation following the Last Supper the deity of the Master is declared, yet still deity in relation to his friends, his faithful, not in abstraction. And all concludes with prayer, the priestly prayer in which the Master (who now knows what he had not known —so he himself professes—till then) consecrates himself, for our sake and for our salvation, to the ensuing sacrifice.

And then John's Passion narrative progresses liturgically, moving inward and downward all the way, transmuting time and place, august, grandly human ; the divine reality breaking through from the universal experience ; steadily burning through the particulars of tragedy, the common horrors of a crucifixion, and leaving nothing horrible ; sublimating sadness gladness, fear hope, weakness strength ; firmly distinguishing the malignancy of the high priests from the

piteous pagan infirmity of Pilate, and the ignorance of the crowd; and meeting all this sin of the world with atoning authority, the authority committed to the Son by the Father in heaven who sent the Son to do and suffer this.

Here indeed the tremendous claim is made. It had indeed been made quite distinctly, but abruptly and strangely, in the earliest Marcan Gospel. When the Lord died the centurion said, Truly this man was the Son of God. There is no article in the Greek, but (if we insist on Greek usage) anarthrous dignity, as in the tragedians, as at the opening of the epistle to the Hebrews, is more likely than vague awe. John at any rate recognised the consummation and drew its meaning out in his own augustly story-telling manner, with the Lord's majestic, It is finished, and royal inclination of his head and resignation of the spirit, and then in the mysterious testimony that follows concerning the water and the blood.

And yet is that testimony mysterious, except in the proper sense of mystery, i.e. sacrament? Neither here nor in the analogous verses of the epistle (when the trinitarian interpolation is purged away) do we fail to understand. To explain in complete words is another thing. But the paradox is allowable by considerate minds, that what we most deeply and really understand is what we never can completely express. There are not many such deep things. Perhaps those

there are may be brought together ultimately into one : of which one the meaning of man's life and the deity of the incarnate Word are two aspects. Did Luke point to that when he varied the centurion's confession to, In reality this man was righteous ? And, thus varying, was Luke (as often) half way to John ?

What do we mean by the deity of the Christ, of the Lord Jesus, of the incarnate Word ? The more we muse, the more we know how impossible is a plain answer. Indeed the plain answer is not the reverent answer : such plainness is presumptuous indolence : there is a grand and humble silence, which is different.*

But as we recognise that we recognise proportionately that the confession itself is necessary. The Christian faith exists thereby. Except for this true deity the simple gospel preached and believed in Galilee could not be the one and the effectual salvation of the world. And the very difficulty and paradox impels towards the right line of answer. The lowliness, humiliation, the sharing in the common lot of the multitude of men is the type and representative essence of the Incarnation. The exclusion of all pomp and

* Testes tot inter, magnanimo, Deus,
Tibi litabat firma silentio
Verbi silentis muta mater :
Cuncta animo penitus premebat.
In Praesentatione Domini,
Parisian Breviary.

vanity, of all conventional honour and merely superior intellect, declares as the angelic proclamation declared, that no raising of human wit power goodness to higher degree will ever lift into another kind. And though " another kind " is not the definition which will satisfy at last, we use it tentatively and instinctively because it does indicate an essential element in trust and adoration. The incarnation is the whole of which our lives are parts. As the goal and purpose of our lives it is always out of reach, beyond, separated, in another world, of another kind. Neither by language thought or act of living can we comprehend it. But we do live into it as well as towards it. And language adumbrates it, and thought suffused in it is transformed, " as it were " into another kind :

> " Into the whyless plains the spirit goes
> The while the body and the mind repose."

Perhaps the Moslem Sufi who wrote that was not imagining a separate faculty, nor merely describing the peace of sleep, but had practically noticed a habit of the ordinary mind : when composed recollected concentrated, and withal weaned from all pretension and content with simplicities for impulse, it does reach a very unaccustomed region. John would not be confused at finding this known to a Moslem, but John was earnest in his endeavour to purge the church

of his day from commonplace and unreality, and to make Christendom for ever a home of supernatural apprehension.

Such then is the Incarnation, pictured in our use and wont of copies as a goal. As ' form ' or ' idea ' it is not in front but lies behind, is about us, or within. It supports embraces pervades informs. It is the reality we can trust, in which we rest and move. Here it is perhaps easier to get rid of the " other kind " and " other world " embarrassment. Nearness not distance is our feeling. The spatial imagination can be almost dispensed with. And we can get back more naturally from the abstractions which are so perilous to real thought, and apply ourselves to the story told by John. There we do behold the glory we require. If John's narrative be true —and who while reading John can doubt it ?— then this glory has appeared : it exists, in closest union with our manhood, and our weakness may continually be invigorated by what we know has been and is. This is a warmer nearer larger thing than an example could be, an example to be followed yet never overtaken.

We are not yet at the heart of the mystery. What we mean by incarnation is more than the platonic idea more than example or inspiration. The renewal of creation was not wrought by a manifestation of love or righteousness. On Calvary the sacrifice was offered.

When, in the Church's order, a boy is confirmed he is admitted to the sacrament of the altar. This makes an immense difference to his worship and his life. Hitherto the service in church at home and in school chapel have brought him discipline instruction fellowship and the peace and consolation of quiet hours, and much more of good and beauty. Now he goes to the altar of atonement and receives the Body and Blood of the Saviour of the World; the Body broken on the Cross, the Blood poured before God for the sin of the world. Death tragedy sin suffering; an offering made received transformed into grace in a supersensual sphere. Worship has become aweful.

And it has become real and intermingled with the wide stern common life of common men. The sacramental worship is but a fancy if it does not come to effect in the sacramental life. The ancient liturgies are intense and sober with this thought, this heroic intention. Those liturgies illuminate but dimly the obscurities about which later controversy gathered. But they pray directly that the Bread and Wine may really be the Body and the Blood and that the reception of that grace may be real and effectual in daily life. The boy, confirmed, has entered upon manhood. Already school is more than the "game" the "leisure" the preliminary exercise; all he does now is already the "taking of his share in suffering as a good soldier" of the divine Lord

who died to save a ruining world, and did save it by dying, and still wins the victory by defeat, and imparts (not gains for himself) life through death ; the Son of man dies and on the third day rises again.

Something like this is aimed at by the term Sacrifice. Again appears the imperfection and yet the marvellous efficiency, a sort of magic, in human language. " Sacrifice oblation and satisfaction " are metaphors or " copies." We cannot analyse or define the sense of terms exhaustively. When all the sacrificial practices of all nations in all times have been collected, and from the collection some degree of orderly inference has been gained about the sacrificial ideas which men have variously entertained, little has been gained for the main purpose after all. Historical comparison is a necessary check upon the presumptions of ignorance, but too soon it conducts away from the centre instead of illustrating. But the bold inadequate terms express what the eternal mind of man does apprehend. The terms in our Prayer Book may have had a precision when put there which a later generation cannot prove. But that matters not. As copies, as symbols, they still awake intellectual sympathy which lasts on unimpaired. This sacrifice is essential sacrifice ; if unique therefore universal. It is the one sacrifice offered from the beginning of the world.

It is universal. For the force of the metaphor compels us to reach into the very substance of life, and so perceive that this sacrifice is not a miracle apart and interruptive, but that all life is wondrous, and what we vaguely, but with true imagination, call transcendence is not a gulf of separation but the eternal source of a never ceasing ultimate union.

This is man's natural confidence in God. This is the Gospel according to S. John: the Word, Life, Light of all men; the sojourn of the Word, the secret marvel of his homely life; the tragedy into which it runs; at last the Passion, as a ritual a mystery; the Sacrifice.

Yet, that being so, our "other world," our "Father in heaven," our "for us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven," must be considered again. A turn has come in the road of dialectic pilgrimage. Transcendence works by copies, and that implies essential kindred, like to like, of one substance with the Father—yes, in the ultimate and the regeneration all sons are really sons, else the deity of the incarnate Word is ineffectual. That is the theology of the Gospel according to S. John: we are obliged to confess that since Chalcedon this bold apostolic theology has been obscured. A turn has come, even to-day, into our dialectic pilgrimage which may not be passed by.

But—"This dialectic method, this continuous

discourse with oneself, being for those who prosecute it with thoroughness coextensive with life itself—a part of the continuous company we keep with ourselves through life—will have its inequalities; its infelicities; above all its final insecurity. 'We argue rashly and adventurously,—writes Plato in *Timaeus*—aye, we the Platonists, sometimes—by reason that like ourselves, our discourses have much participation in temerity and chance.' "

Let not the quotation from Mr Pater's *Plato and Platonism* be thought frivolous in our present context. It is at least a parable of serious theology. From age to age the friction and oscillation of theology, from Alexandria to Antioch and back again, and the interweaving of the paces paced again, is the method of what John calls knowing; the gradual knowing, by experience and patience and humility and penitence, of the Father and the Son he sent; the knowing which is eternal life.

Knowing lingers, needs frequent correction. " Knowledge " is one of the forbidden words in John. But one hold abides. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, said the Master: What he tells and teaches we may take in more or less, little by little as experience is filled out and castigated; but all the while, he promises that if we love one another all will be always well. One hold abides: not truth but

love. Herein metaphor passes beyond illusion. "God is Love" not Justice Truth or any other "idea," but only love, in the Christian metaphysic. And "We love, because he first loved us" is the Johannine metaphysic of human nature, its essence and divine capacity. And "as he is so are we in this world" is the Johannine doctrine of the Incarnation; which cannot be repeated, and for all time stands incomparable yet most common; and is understood by sinners who dare to seek thereby an undeserved salvation.

## XIII

### "WHEN THAT WHICH DREW FROM OUT THE BOUNDLESS DEEP TURNS AGAIN HOME"

In the pilgrimage of our mortality we look forward wondering what lies beyond. Is there hope of life after death? Have we any assurance of trust?

But trust—that carries us into another mood. What is this trust? In what? In whom? First we saw that from our actual experience of our mortal life we have reason to trust its purpose of goodness. That purpose involves a more permanent element in our manhood than the perishing body with its vain desires. Only when we "care for the soul that it may be as good as possible" can we deal with the question of eternal life. Then we considered what is meant by the great Name God. Whatever else it must mean it evokes a venture of thought. This venture might seem a mere hypothesis or fancy, but serious consideration leads to another conclusion. God is not a notion invented by the human self, but the essence of all that

"givenness" which seems to embrace our experience of life, and which insistently recurs, however the sense of it be weakened for a while in periods of humanistic or critical philosophy.

But if God mean so much as that, God must mean more. If our small lives be so full and purposeful and vivid, God in whom these are all and each included must be thought of as God who lives, and as God of the living not of the dead, for all live unto him.

But in sequel: such large idea being given the thought of our private self seems to shrink. Further consideration shews that "self" does not lose but changes its importance. This mortal life is a discipline for the getting true possession of ourselves. By degrees we learn to contemplate our selves. You become conscious of your self; and then the question abruptly rises: And you, who are you? Your self, my self, our mortal or immortal selves—the ultimate reality or goodness of life does not abide in these.

So then it seems that here already we discern a real form of life eternal. It is life in God.

And this was the tradition of that nation of the ancient world whose religion was peculiarly a religion of God. The tradition of Israel gave to the patriarchs a vague idyllic trust: Here in this earthly life we are pilgrims with God; and when we die we go to him. Vague perhaps and yet sublime: patriarchal however, and unsatisfying

to the multitude. And so we find in the Old Testament another faith, attested by more than mere tradition, dominating average Israelites. This was the idea of Sheol or the Pit, half a hope and half a dread. This was the idea that every man does live beyond (or in) the grave, a shadowy comfortless life cut off from the care of God. This was the superstition which Israel shared with pagan nations. It is not endorsed as true faith by the Bible of Israel, the Old Testament ; and the prophets set their face against it. For more and more clearly the prophets (that is the great prophets, Amos Isaiah and the rest) taught that the Lord God is the one living God and that there is no place or state outside his care.

The prophets' doctrine at last prevailed in part : in part it was modified. Sheol was purified not abolished. From it arose the doctrine of the Pharisees, Resurrection of the body and judgement to come.

Henceforth, in New Testament as well as Old, these two lines run on. " The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob is not the God of the dead but of the living : all live unto him "—the line of eternal life :—" Brethren I am a Pharisee, the son of Pharisees : touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question . . . and he reasoned of righteousness and temperance and the judgement to come "—the line of life beyond the grave and personal immortality.

But the metaphor of line must be taken for continuity not boundary. Everywhere, but especially in the New Testament, these lines interlace. And "personal immortality" is but a conventional phrase, brief but not precise. Tennyson said in *In Memoriam*

"Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside";

and later he said in *God and the Universe*

"Spirit nearing yon dark portal at the limit of thy human state"—

where the last five words might satisfy many who scruple about "personal" immortality. And as years meditation and discussion sharpened the rough edges of his thought, he made this concession:

"If the absorption into the divine in the after-life be the creed of some, let them at all events allow us many existences of individuality before this absorption; since this short-lived individuality seems to be but too short a preparation for so mighty a union."

In which concession it is noticeable that he is influenced by the conviction that continued individuality is necessary to moral progress; and this influence appears again and again in the history of religion, in Plato, in the Maccabean Pharisees, in S. Paul. And still more significant

is the context (*Memoir*, i. p. 319) of his own " passionate desire " for union with God, the only Whole. Sometimes indeed, he says, during " a kind of waking trance I have frequently had . . . out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being, and this not a confused state but the clearest of the clearest . . . where death was an impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction but the only true life."

However, such trances are not for all ; eternal life and the comfort of the communion of saints are for all who care for life and goodness and are therefore capable of love.

So far the summary in this concluding chapter has been cold. Plato and the Old Testament burn with love. Shall I live ? is not the question true pilgrims of mortality care about, but Does my friend live ? Are we parted for ever ? Are we parted at all ? Can death, accepted spiritually, be a process in the eternal communion of souls ?

Plato answers : Certainly he lives ; and in some sort there may be communion. Israel's patriarchs prophets and psalmists answer : God lives, and what more need you ask ? But in the New Testament we enter upon a new world of assurance.

First, we learn the life and mutual love of the

Lord Jesus and his disciples. Then his death and resurrection. The resurrection—in the simplicity of Mark and Acts, in Paul so far as his essential faith is concerned, and above all in John the inspired experienced interpreter—is what makes these friends certain that he who called them friends does indeed live, and through one Spirit, his and theirs, lives in most real communion with them. Paul's rhetoric quite certainly implies that in the life of their Lord all his faithful also live a life which death cannot interrupt. He does not say that they too have communion with one another. And though his inherited Jewish creed fades and dissolves into purer light, he still and to the last looks forward to a completion of Christ's presence which as yet is only to be hoped for or progressed towards: the "trumpet" shall still announce the advent; the moral evolution of humanity shall be fulfilled in the Christ that is to be. Meanwhile the generations die and sleep and wait the "change." A great faith, but it "comes in from the side" of Pharisaic Judaism, not from the boundless deep of patriarchal and saintly Gentile trustfulness, of Galilean gospel and Johannine expansion. It permeates the Christian creed as Paulinism. From time to time it breaks forth afresh in its genuine power as Paul himself reforming our dead hearts, not Paulinism but Paul. And still the Church recurs to the instinct of human nature, wonderfully

constituted and more wonderfully renewed, to that which is and was and ever shall be, to that which once was the dream of humanity but which since the Word became flesh is eternal life here and now in knowing the Father, and is also experience of communion unspoiled by death for all who try to keep the " new " commandment, loving one another—" as I have loved you "—with that new kind of love which the Word made flesh and crucified inaugurated.

Here is the Communion of Saints of the Creed. It is confirmed by the authority of " John." That name may signify S. John the apostle speaking directly or indirectly through his evangelist, the inheritor and arranger of his recollections and later experience, or it may signify some less near relation to the days of Galilee. We cannot tell. The most erudite sensible and patient criticism must issue at last in a cautious guess, a working hypothesis. But we do clearly see how the sympathy of this Gospel surpasses mere authority. It tells of life eternal, and as in the Old Testament that continually returned to the profound simplicity of trust in the living God, so here it ever carries us to the Person of the Incarnate Word as its pledge. And the Person means the character. We go back beyond Paul and his epistle to the Colossians to Galilee and the simple gospel preached and believed there, and we read it again in John naturally enriched with the experience of

all good men and sincere penitents and yearning souls in all places and all times—the nations walk in the light thereof. Simplifying, universalising, the one true religion since the world began renews the Gospel for its world-wide destiny of consolation. When we read John we muse on things old and new and dream of a Galilean church, pervading more than militant, as wide and yet as pure as the Way the Truth and the Life. Platonists in Europe, known by other names in the East, Johannines more or less imperfect all of them, witnesses to Spirit as the one and ultimate reality, these are our examples. Often overwhelmed in the charitable service of mere founded religions—which as being founded must soon or late decline and fall—they still protest silently that Christianity is not one of these; and presently their temper again prevails.

Bass Mullinger ends his last chapter of *The University of Cambridge* with the subsidence of those Cambridge Platonists whose story he has told more understandingly than any other historian. The sentences typify this faith:

"In the course of another century the last of the Cambridge Platonists had passed away: Rust . . . More and Cudworth, within a year of each other, the former having outlived, to a great extent, his reputation; the latter with his merits still unrecognized. . . . By this time the higher philosophical inspiration of the movement had spent itself. . . . But the

influence of the convictions which these thinkers represented long survived. In these ancient halls and by the silent river—athwart which, six centuries before, the Saxon dwellers round St. Bene't's Church had gazed on the rising walls of the Norman stronghold,—throughout the long conflict between Latin ecclesiasticism and English patriotism, no utterances, at once so urgent and so persuasive, had been heard. And as a band of 'harpers harping with their harps,' although their strains grow fainter with the receding ages, they still recall the celestial song over the manger at Bethlehem, that told of peace on earth and goodwill to men."

You contemplate your self: and you, who are you? So we asked at the beginning of this discourse. Now we partly discern the answer. The self we soon and slightly know is not substantial. It grows and wanes and flickers, corroborated and attenuated by dependence on the unsubstantial appearance of this mortal scene. The real and very self is indeed linked thereto: through appearance we reach reality, and appearance participates in reality.

Yet we reach this reality more certainly by a larger way than that of our private self. Isolated the private self is a mere name. In proportion as the imperfect private self is forgotten the true self comes to his own. And he is more than me. I find him in myself, more in neighbours

and in friends, and in all the duty joy and sadness of the world which becomes intelligible in him. He was from the beginning with God. He was and is divine. In him was everything made that has been made. And he is the light of men and of the world. Our life is in him and his in us: his wholly in us; ours progressively in him. And perhaps the shadow we call death is the last effect of his light upon the motion of our senses, and through that shadow we arrive the shore of light indeed.

But such language is metaphor; as it must be. Nor can we know what that shore is "like": what that state that "mansion" in ultimate purity may be.

But this we know. He shewed it to John, and John tells us; and conscience experience and love tell the same: love first and last and best. He is in the Father and we in him. And "we" means disciples conjoined with him in eternal life; because trusting him we have gone with him to the Father and because we love one another. In this assurance there is no room for death as separation. By means of death (a mystery as natural and as divine as love) memory and "good example" become more than ever the interpenetration of vital affection, of living soul: and this can be tested by experience.

The true self is One. We know it supremely as it was once beheld and apprehended in the transi-

tory separateness of mortal life ; and the gospel history is a history of the gradual transcending of that separateness. The " going to the Father " inaugurated the imitation—perpetual rather than repeated—of that same process through all generations. Still the disciples trust the Master and go with him and learn to know the Father ; " that they may be perfected into one."

The process is hindered by hindrances without and within. The experience is very humbling. It abolishes all satisfaction with independent human nature. Our poverty of character is and long remains so abject that the whole Gospel goodwill is again and again clouded with doubt. Thy sins are forgiven : I have overcome the world : My grace is sufficient for thee :—we are of good cheer and then we doubt again.

But of the eternal communion of disciples—however weak the disciples be—we hardly can doubt, if only we have love one to another.

Printed in Great Britain by T. and A. Constable Ltd.
at the University Press, Edinburgh.